ABSTRACT

EDUCATIONAL LEADERSHIP

BROWNLEE-WILLIAMS, YOLANDA B.S. TUSKEGEE UNIVERSITY, 1997
M.ED. AUBURN UNIVERSITY, 1999
ED.S. LINCOLN MEMORIAL
UNIVERSITY, 2004

SELECTED VARIABLES AND FACTORS RELATED TO PERFORMANCE OF STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES: IMPLICATIONS FOR SCHOOL LEADERS

Committee Chair: Dr. Trevor Turner

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The purpose of this study was to examine the extent of the relationship of the Criterion-Referenced Competency Test (CRCT) scores in Reading and Math for students with disabilities and purposefully selected independent variables in selected Title I schools. It was the goal of this study to disclose some of the variables that directly impact the performance of students with disabilities (SWDs) on the CRCT in order to improve instructional practices of classroom teachers, the quality of educational leadership programs, the awareness of school leaders on the needs of SWDs and the teachers that provide instruction to them, and to give stakeholders that influence educational policy suggestions on implementation for polices that directly effect SWD student achievement. The study used a QUAN-QUAL research design to triangulate the

data through standardized assessment results, teacher surveys, and teacher interviews. The researcher concluded that parental involvement, special education setting, gender, and disability category directly effect SWD performance on the CRCT.

SELECTED VARIABLES AND FACTORS RELATED TO PERFORMANCE OF STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES: IMPLICATIONS FOR SCHOOL LEADERS

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This process has been an unexplainable experience, but I know that I have not done it alone. I know that without God, family, and friends this all would have not been possible. By far my greatest achievement has been the birth of my son, Allen, III (Tre). You are the reason that Mommy strives to the best at all things. I thank you for being a good son while Mommy was away in class and writing. Thank you, Mama and Daddy, for always expecting the best from me and encouragement every step of the way. I love you both for all that you have done to get me to this moment. Although I had to complete the educational requirements for this degree, I know that life does not stop for school. I could not have done any of this without the continuous support of my wonderful partner Patsy. Thank you for being Tre's #2 Mommy during this journey. He and I love you dearly. To my best friend and sister, Dwy, thank you for always providing comic relief right when I needed it. To my friends Terance and Melanie, without you two I don't know if I would have made it through. To my other friends, thank you all for being a "get away" and reminding me to have fun no matter what! Dr. Turner and Dr. Dashiell-Mitchell thank you for your continuous support throughout this process. To Dr. N. L. Moffett, no words can describe how your motivation and support since 2009 has influenced the way that I view education, leadership, and research. I thank you for believing in me and seeing something in me that I never saw in myself. Your support will never be forgotten! Thank you! Thank you! Thank you!

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INTRODUCTION

Statement of the Problem

The purpose of this study was to examine the extent of the relationship of the Criterion-Referenced Competency Test (CRCT) scores in reading and math for students with disabilities and purposefully selected independent variables in selected Title I schools. A teacher survey also identified perspectives of student achievement from the teachers of selected students with disabilities to ascertain emerging themes from their perceptions and experiences of school leadership characteristics as outlined in the literature review.

The educational system that exists in the United States presently was nonexistent during its first 250 years. America's public school system truly emerged to a significant scale midway through the 19th century (Haynes, 2008). With the launch of the Soviet Union's Sputnik satellite in 1957, the United States government began to expand its role in the education of its citizens, particularly in the areas of math and science. Sputnik galvanized the United States to create reforms in science and engineering education so that the nation could regain the technological ground that it appeared to have lost to its Soviet rival. United States government officials were fearful that with the success of Sputnik came another viable threat. The launch of Sputnik signaled that the Soviets had the capacity to launch missiles that could possibly carry nuclear weapons from Europe to

the United States (National Aeronautics and Space Administration, 2007). This was only the beginning of the U.S government's role in the American education system. In 1965, Public Law 89-313 was passed by Congress to amend Title I of Elementary and Secondary Education Act. Prior to the passing of this law, there was no statute for state operated or supported schools to receive financial assistance for handicapped children (Zettel, 1977). The focal point of this law was a program called Title I; it gave additional funding for reading and math to schools that serviced disadvantaged children (Hess & Petrilli, 2006). Soon after ESEA, Congress passed Public Law 90-247 also known as Title VII of ESEA and the Bilingual Education Act in 1968, this law focused on local school districts providing programs to assist children in developing their English language skills.

A short time later, in the early 1970s, specifically 1971 and 1972, two landmark cases changed the face of education. In Pennsylvania Association for Retarded Children (P.A.R.C) vs. Commonwealth of Pennsylvania (1971), 13 parents challenged the state's position on excluding mentally retarded children from public schools. In the case of Mills vs. Board of Education of District of Columbia (1972) plaintiffs challenged the practices of schools excluding, suspending, expelling, reassigning and transferring students without due process (Zettel, 1977). The outcomes of these two cases lead to what is now known as Public Law 94-142 (PL 94-142) or the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA). The exclusion of handicapped children from public schools continued until 1975. In 1975, the U.S government identified another group of American citizens that were not being serviced adequately in the public schools. Public

Law 94-142 required that schools provide a Free and Appropriate Education (FAPE) to children identified as having disabilities (Haynes, 2008).

The goal of IDEA was to assure that all handicapped children have available to them "a free and appropriate education which emphasizes special education and related services designed to meet their unique needs" (Zettel, 1977, p. 7). PL 94-142 is essentially two acts in one. It is a Rights Act, which means that it includes a mandate that all handicapped children must be educated. It is also a Management Act, which means it establishes specific management, reporting and evaluation procedures for federal, state, and local educational agencies. Under the management portion of the act, it also provides for federal funds to help assist state and local educational agencies in providing the special education and related services to meet the needs of the children that are severed under this law (Zettel, 1977). Before PL 94-142, the fate of many individuals with disabilities was likely to be very dim (U.S. Department of Education, 2012). PL 94-142 was a catalyst for progressing towards national goals that would create and implement effective programs and services for early intervention, special education and related services. It also contributed to having more children with disabilities attend their neighborhood schools, graduate from high school, enter postsecondary schools, and secure employment (U.S Department of Education, 2012). With the enactment of these related laws, the American public could conclude that the United States was headed in the right direction in terms of educating its children. But with the release of a document called "A Nation at Risk," the American public was given a completely different view of the state of the nation's schools.

President Ronald Reagan introduced *A Nation at Risk* to the world in a White House ceremony on April 26, 1983 (Toppo, 2008). *A Nation at Risk* was the result of an eighteen month long study conducted by the National Commission on Excellence in Education. In 1981, Secretary of Education, T.H. Bell, created the National Commission on Excellence in Education. The Commission was directed to examine the quality of education in the U.S (U.S. Department of Education, 2012). The report by the Commission uncovered four aspects of American education that contributed to the decline of America's education system. The contents of this document shocked its readers. It described America's educational system as being mediocre in terms of the content that students learn, the expectation of the learning for students, the time dedicated to learning, and the quality of the teachers in the classroom (Wakeman, Browder, Meier, & McColl, 2007).

In terms of content, the report indicated that the academic curriculum presented to students was diluted. Expectations for student achievement were not high. There was a significant decline in the amount of rigor students were exposed to in subject areas. Students were also spending less time completing homework assignments and overall there was less time devoted to learning. Lastly, the quality of teaching had declined due to not having strong candidates in Teacher Preparation Programs at colleges and universities. The Commission concluded that declines in the educational performance could be contributed to the inadequacies in the way the educational process is often conducted. Since the release of *A Nation at Risk*, the United States has been in a continuous race to improve the nation's educational system. The publication of this

document marked the beginning of the evolution in achievement testing and standards-based education reform (Jorgensen & Hoffman, 2003). Not since the launch of Sputnik had the U.S felt as if its schools were being left behind. *A Nation at Risk* was only the beginning of America's educational revolution.

In 1994, President William Clinton signed into law the Goals 2000: Educate America Act and Congress approved the Reauthorization of ESEA. Jointly, these two laws were supposed to serve as catalyst to the development and implementation of standards-based, systemic education reform in the states (Superfine, 2005). Jorgensen and Hoffman (2003) identified the guiding themes of the reauthorization of ESEA as: high standards for all children; a focus on teaching and learning; partnerships among families, communities, and schools; flexibility coupled with responsibility for student performance; and resources targeted to areas of greatest need. Subsequently, the Goals 2000 legislation compelled states to institute academic standards in each grade and to generate tests to measure whether students had mastered the standards (Hess & Petrilli, 2006). In essence, Goals 2000 attempted to nationalize education reform. Although the law provided for increased financial flexibility at the state and local levels, it required them to submit to certain accountability measures. According to Chenoweth (2004), the provisions of the 1994 reauthorization never took full effect because most states failed to comply with them. Goals 2000 and the Reauthorization of ESEA faced a number of problems after they passed, particularly in the area of their accountability mechanisms. In order for the laws to work, implementation and execution depended on the support of a

variety of people. Because of these problems, Goals 2000 in particular lost most of its vigor by the end of 1996 (Superfine, 2005).

Purpose of the Study

The No Child Left Behind (NCLB) Act of 2001, which was implemented in 2002, is the most recent reauthorization of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) (Popham, 2005). NCLB was an astonishing departure from the previous educational reforms in terms of its requirements and its sponsors (Sunderman, Kim, & Orfield, 2005). It included stricter requirements because most educators did not take the provisions of the 1994 reauthorization ESEA seriously (Brown, 2002). For the first time, Congress has specified a deadline for when it expects all students to reach proficiency on state assessments that show students' have mastered grade level standards (Purcell, East, & Rude, 2005). The United States Congress' primary goal in passing NCLB was to hold States and public schools accountable for improving student achievement in reading and math (Yell, Katsiyannas, & Shiner, 2006). The school year that U.S. Congress has given the States to reach the goal of 100% proficiency in reading and math for all students is 2013-2014. The most significant challenges for special education leaders and managers include: (a) the requirements for adequate yearly progress for all learners, (b) the provisions for Highly Qualified special education service providers, and (c) an adequate amount of attention devoted to all subgroups of learners (Purcell, et al., 2005). Although many local education agencies may be having difficulties meeting all of the requirements of NCLB, schools must demonstrate adequate yearly progress (AYP) as defined by states for all elementary and secondary students (Anderson, 2005). Since the passing of the

adequate yearly progress requirement for Title I school performance in the No Child Left Behind legislation, Title I schools have been challenged with the outcomes for various subgroups meeting state mandated requirements. These data outcomes are based upon policy and procedures submitted by States for the implementation of NCLB.

The Georgia Criterion-Referenced Competency Test (CRCT) determines local school performance for all public elementary and middle schools. The CRCT is used to determine student performance on the Georgia Performance Standards (GPS). Table 1 gives an overview of the historical performance of students in Georgia public schools who were tested using the state mandated CRCT in reading and math for all students in grades 3 through 8 for the for the school years 2006 through 2010. The 2011 scores included on the chart provided include scores for students with disabilities that were assessed using the newly approved Criterion-Referenced Competency Test-Modified (CRCT-M). The CRCT-M is a grade level alternate assessment for eligible students who receive special education services. It assesses the same grade-level standards of GPS as the CRCT. Each student's individual education plan (IEP) team determines students that are eligible to be assessed via CRCT-M. Students assessed via CRCT-M typically are not functioning at an academic level that would warrant them taking the CRCT, nor are they functioning at a level that would warrant assessment via Georgia Alternative Assessment (GAA). The chart illustrates the scores for all students as well as the overall performance of the SWD subgroup for the aforementioned years.

Table 1

Historical Performance of Selected Sate of Georgia Students on the CRCT (% of Students Meeting and Exceeding the CRCT Standards in Grades 3-8)

Reading	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011
SWD 3rd	67	69	68	68	74	*79
SWD 4th	61	65	64	64	66	*67
SWD 5th	59	64	61	63	65	*72
SWD 6th	66	68	69	64	66	*75
SWD 7th	51	57	59	63	61	*67
SWD 8th	65	61	64	69	75	*82
All 3rd	83	85	87	88	90	91
All 4th	81	85	87	87	89	88
All 5th	81	86	87	88	90	91
All 6th	86	89	91	90	91	94
All 7th	80	85	88	89	89	91
All 8th	89	89	91	93	95	96
Target AMO	**66.7**	**66.7**	**66.7**	**73.3**	**73.3**	**80.0**
Math	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011
SWD 3rd	NA	NA	45	52	53	*60
SWD 4th	NA	NA	41	45	46	*58
SWD 5th	NA	NA	38	47	48	*63

(continued)

Table 1 (continued)

Math	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011
SWD 6th	28	29	34	40	40	*45
SWD 7th	NA	38	45	52	54	*65
SWD 8th	NA	NA	27	34	38	*46
All 3rd	NA	NA	71	78	80	81
All 4th	NA	NA	70	74	77	81
All 5th	NA	NA	72	79	82	87
All 6th	62	65	69	75	75	76
All 7th	NA	74	80	84	85	89
All 8th	NA	NA	62	70	74	78
Target AMO	**58.3**	**58.3**	**58.3**	**59.5**	**67.6**	**75.0**

*In 2011, some SWD were eligible for the CRCT-M. This change makes longitudinal comparisons inappropriate. NA notes that the test not given for specified grade level during that school year.

Significance of the Study

Students with disabilities failure to meet annual measurable objectives (AMO) on state assessments as defined by No Child Left Behind (NCLB) has prevented many Title I schools in the State of Georgia from making adequate yearly progress (AYP) (Georgia Department of Education, 2012a). In 2011, 21% of third grade, 33% of forth grade, 28% of fifth grade, 25% of sixth grade, 33% of seventh grade, and 18% of eighth grade students with disabilities who took the Georgia Criterion-Reference Competency

Test did not meet state standards in reading. During that same year, 40% of third grade, 42% of forth grade, 37% of fifth grade, 55% of sixth grade, 35% of seventh grade, and 54% of eight grade students with disabilities did not meet state standards in mathematics (Georgia Department of Education, 2012b). NCLB requires that all students meet state standards; therefore, this study focuses on the variables that influence the student achievement of students with disabilities.

Summary

State and national assessments of student progress have suggested that student achievement in reading and math has remained stagnant over the past 40 years despite massive infusions of federal money (Yell et al., 2006). The NCLB Act of 2001 requires all subgroups to meet or exceed the state standards in reading and math in grades 3-8; therefore the students with disabilities population is expected to perform at the levels of their non-disabled peers. As a result, states are required to provide a standard instrument of measure for all students. This study collected data for analysis around the questions posed in this study related to the demographic variables, the policy factors, and the emerging themes that are found through interviews of key participants in the study. The purpose of this study was to examine the extent of the relationship of the CRCT scores in reading and math for students with disabilities and purposefully selected independent variables in selected Title I schools. A teacher survey also identified perspectives of student achievement from the teachers of selected students with disabilities to ascertain emerging themes from their perceptions and experiences of school leadership characteristics as outlined in the literature review.

CHAPTER II

REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

To offer a conceptual framework for the empirical research reviewed, this chapter will examine the theoretical literature and empirical studies associated with the history of educational federal legislation, state policy, students with disabilities, local education agencies, reading and math achievement, parents and IEP, and school leadership.

Federal Legislation

In 2001, Congress passed No Child Left Behind Act; President George W. Bush signed it into law on January 8, 2002. This new law reauthorized the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965. As a result of the new law, schools are required to demonstrate adequate yearly progress for all elementary and secondary students including students with disabilities (Anderson, 2005). NCLB required states to establish challenging standards; to implement assessments that measure students' performance against those standards; and to hold schools accountable for achievement in reading, math, and science. (Browder, Wakeman, Flowers, Rickelman, et al., 2007). Previous federal education laws have set precedents for NCLB. Many of the provisions of NCLB build on past federal laws. Laws that stand out as precedents for NCLB include: National Defense Education Act of 1958 (NDEA) which focused on math and science (Carlson, 1959); Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965 (ESEA) which

dramatically increased federal support for K-12 education; Education for All Handicapped Children Act of 1975 (P.L. 94-142) detailed due process and administrative requirements for children with disabilities; and Goals 2000: Educate America Act, which outlined eight goals to be achieved by the schools in the U.S by 2000.

Historically, the operation of public schools in the United States has been typically the responsibility of the states and local communities. Usually, but not always, opponents of federal aid were conservatives, Republicans, and Southern Democrats (Anderson, 2005). Those in opposition of NCLB seem to be fearful of states becoming more and more regulated by federal mandates in education. In the past, states were primarily responsible for the educational well being of the states' residents. NCLB has dramatically increased the federal role in education and has required states, school districts, and schools to focus on the outcomes of teaching (Yell, et al., 2006).

NCLB has had a great effect on the way public school students are educated in America (Yell & Drasgow, 2005). It endorses the belief that all students can learn to high levels if they are taught to high levels and establishes a goal of proficiency for all students in core content areas (Brown, 2002). Current federal policy requires students with disabilities participate in large-scale assessments and be included in schools' scores for adequate yearly progress (Browder, et al., 2007). Congress and the President believed that to ensure that instruction and achievement for students with disabilities is improved, all students with disabilities must be assessed and the results of these assessments must be included in the data used to determine if a school and school district make AYP. In crafting the NCLB, Congress set an end goal of having 100% of all students proficient by

the 2013-2014 school year. In order to achieve this goal, states were to establish annual measurable objectives (AMOs). The AMOs are the minimum percentage of students required to meet or exceed the advanced and proficient levels on the academic assessments in each school. As an alternate route to making AYP, states can employ the safe harbor provision. Safe harbor allows a school to make AYP if the percentage of students not reaching proficient decreases by at least ten percent and the school meets the other performance indicators of graduation or attendance rates (Embler, 2006). In order to make AYP, schools must have (a) at least 95% of enrolled students participate in the testing program, (b) all students and all subgroups score at least proficient at the state's AYP targets for that year, and (c) all students and all subgroups meet AYP targets for graduation or attendance (Yell, et al., 2006). Schools that do not make AYP are labeled, as needs improvement. For schools that fail to make progress a sequence of corrective measures must be taken by the school district (Anderson, 2005).

State Policy

"Prior to the passage of No Child Left Behind, all of the states had federally approved state curriculum standards in the areas of language arts, mathematics and science" (Haynes, 2008, p. 16). Presently, U.S. funding for education rests primarily in the hand of state and local government. According to the Government Accountability Office, state may spend $1.9 billion to $5.3 billion from 2002 to 2008 in order to implement the NCLB state mandated tests. Included in these figures are the cost for developing, scoring, and reporting the tests, which are all under contracts with private

corporations (Arce, Luna, Borjian, & Conrad, 2005). The federal government does not bear the burden of the cost of implementing NCLB.

Each state is required to analyze the achievement of the following subgroups of students within each school: all racial/ethnic groups, low-income students, students with disabilities, and students with limited English proficiency (Hess & Petrilli, 2006). Unfortunately, states did not know that proficient levels that were set prior to NCLB would ultimately determine the initial starting point for improving achievement in each state. During the first year of NCLB implementation, states we also required to identify Title I schools that failed to meet definitions of AYP. These definitions were determined before NCLB and varied dramatically across states (Kim, 2003). Fortunately, states were allowed to determine the number of students necessary to create a subgroup (Wakeman, et al., 2007). States are also allowed to set the minimum size ("n" size), under which subgroup scores will not exist (Hess & Petrilli, 2006). Although the states were given some flexibility in the design of NCLB in their individual states, if not designed properly, states have inadvertently set themselves up for failure.

Local Education Agencies (LEA)

The Wallace Foundation (2011) published a report that outlined school districts' role in turning around low performing schools. The report suggested that districts: refocus central office staff on supporting principals as instructional leaders; direct more funding to high-need, hard-to-staff schools; create incentives that will permit schools with the most needs to appeal to high-quality principals and teachers; decrease principal turnover; provide timely, relevant data and training that will assist principals with

accurately diagnosing and addressing learning needs; and use principal assessments to focus more attention on improving instruction.

Howard and Rice-Crenshaw (2006) conducted a study with two schools that had unsatisfactory rating at the beginning of the study. One school was listed as the control school and the other school was listed as an experimental school. Using the model for school reform—Turning Good Teachers in to Great Teachers: Turning Green Apples into Red Apples—the experimental group was exposed to all aspects of the model whereas the control group was not. The results of this study revealed that the experimental group moved from an unsatisfactory rating to an average rating. The control group retained an unsatisfactory rating. The researchers concluded that total commitment to change is warranted in order for innovative approaches and systems, such as Turning Good Teachers to Great Teachers: Green Apples into Red Apples, to work.

Terry (2010) presented the findings of two case studies that were conducted to describe and elucidate the reaction of P-12 districts to policy mandates introduced through federal legislation. Two Midwestern suburban school districts were used in this study. The researcher explores each district's organizations response to NCLB as well as school administrator's response to the mandates. A cross-case analysis led to the development of Compliance, Commitment, and Capacity Model (CCCM) to present the district's response to policy mandates. Common themes were reported under the relationship of the corresponding research questions that reflected how P-12 administrators: learn about and assess mandate requirements, how they respond to mandates and monitor district implementation, and what administrative challenges are

created by NCLB mandates? Findings indicated that administrators learn and assess mandate requirements by gathering information from first external partners, then by internal communication and collaborative assessment of compliance requirements; respond to mandates and monitor district implementation through traditional bureaucratic processes, and challenges face by both districts were their lack of ability to successfully connect NCLB's purpose to educational practice and student learning in their districts. Overall the findings insinuate P-12 districts' routine responses to educational reform mandates are not enough to produce deep changes in educational practice.

School Leadership

Elmore (2000) found that leadership tends to be romanticized in the American culture. Americans tend to lean heavily towards the trait theory in terms of indicating the success of leaders. In essence, people believe that leaders' personal characteristics are better indicators of potential leaders than those who display effort, skill, or knowledge. This author also believes that if leadership were de-romanticized, the outcome would have a positive effect on the overall quality of leadership in schools. In addition, Elmore argues that standards-based reform forces educators to rethink how we view the organization of school and the leaders in the school system. In order to make significant improvements, there must be a fundamental shift in the way that schools are led.

Pepper (2010) supported the notion that in order to meet the mandates outlined in the Obama administration's Blueprint for Reform, principals would be more effective if they exercised leadership styles that are both transactional and transformational. Transactional leadership focuses on management whereas transformational leadership

focuses on change. Transactional leaders seek to ensure that procedures and job descriptions are in place to assure that the organization's goals and expectations are accomplished. Conversely, transformational leaders seek to inspire members of the organization to focus on a common goal. If school leaders are able to combine these two leadership styles, the researcher contends that the faculty and staff will work together to focus on the shared vision of improving instruction for students.

Crum, Sherman, and Myran (2009) conducted a qualitative study examining the theories of actions developed by principals that contribute to their success as a leader during this time of accountability. The researchers used an inductive, exploratory designed that was developed around the framework of Leithwood , Day, Sammons, Harris, and Hopkins (2006). Participants consisted of 12 principals that were purposefully selected from a list of identified successful school in the Commonwealth of Virginia. The results revealed the following emerging themes as it relates to factors that contributed to their success as principals: leadership with data, fostering ownership and collaboration, honesty and relationships, recognizing and developing leadership, fostering ownership and collaboration, and instructional awareness and involvement.

Gardiner, Canfield-Davis, and Anderson (2008) investigated how six principals responded to the mandates of the No Child Left Behind law. Using a qualitative case study methodology, the researchers interviewed the principals over the span of one school year. Participants were selected based on the criteria of having at least three years of experience as a principal and if their schools had experienced significant growth in its number of ethnically and/or socioeconomically diverse students. The results from the

study reveal three emerging themes from the analyzed data that were specific to multicultural leadership approaches and NCLB issues. They included: multicultural knowledge and equity policies, connections with family and community, and testing and assessment preparedness.

Highly Qualified Teachers (HQT)

According to the Secretary's Annual Report on Teacher Quality, schools of education and teacher training programs are currently failing to produce the teachers that can meet the demands and mandates of No Child Left Behind Act. The requirement of hiring "highly qualified" teachers (HQT) has cast an additional burden on local education agencies. They must hire only highly qualified teachers in order to receive Title I funds. If school districts choose to hire teachers in core academic areas that are not deemed as HQT, they could lose their Title I funding (U.S. Department of Education, 2001).

In order for teachers to meet the standard of HQT, all teachers must have: completed a bachelor's degree, pass subject content and pedagogy test to demonstrate competence, and hold full state certification. Middle and high school teachers must also validate competence in their subject(s) by holding a degree in the assigned subject or comparable course work. Since NCLB requires all states to place HQT in all classrooms, it is likely that most states will need to take drastic measures in order to meet the requirements (Blank, Langesen, Laird, Toyce, & Bandeira de Mello, 2004).

Although NCLB has outlined the requirements for teachers, there is still the issue of teacher preparation. The National Academy of Education Committee on Teacher Education provided a summary of what the research has revealed about learning,

teaching, and teacher education. The report revealed that preparing HQT for classrooms across the U.S. requires a combination of strategies and techniques. In order to assure that teachers have proper training prior to entering classrooms, they should have had an extensive student teaching experience, performance assessments and/or portfolios, coursework that require analysis of teaching and learning, and proper supervision in the field by a qualified teacher that would provide feedback and suggestions for improvement. Supervising teachers and university professors must provide integrated learning experiences, model best practices, provide clear examples, and encourage candidates to improve their skills (Darling-Hammond & Baratz-Snowden, 2007).

Thompson and Smith (2005) conducted a study that examined the perceptions of participants in a teacher preparation program. The primary focus of the study was to assess the program's overall strengths and weaknesses as perceived by the participating candidates that were enrolled in the Integrative Studies Major Professional Education Block for fall and student teaching for spring semester. The participants included a nonrandom sample of 27 teacher candidates. The teacher preparation program was an Integrative Studies Major Program leading to an elementary teaching licensure in early and middle grades education. Multiple open-ended surveys revealed that participants believed that they were well prepared to begin their teaching career. The participants reported that the relative strengths of the teacher preparation program were: "The intensity and depth of classroom experience" and that they "were able to see best practice in operation." Relative weaknesses of the program were reported as well, candidates revealed that they became "overwhelmed" with the workload during their internship.

Candidates felt that some of the assignments required by the university felt like "busy work." Lastly, candidates were also not pleased with the university's requirement for candidates to pass the Prasis II Exam before staring their student teaching experience. The researchers acknowledged that the program meets the criteria for producing highly qualified teachers.

According to Haycock (1998), many studies have been conducted which revealed that schools, especially, teachers make a difference in student achievement. William L. Sanders, directory of the Value-Added Research and Assessment Center at the University of Tennessee, Knoxville (as cited by Haycock, 1998) found that when students are placed with effective or noneffective teachers, there is a significant effect on student performance. Low achieving students placed with the most effective teachers made dramatic gains over one school year. Conversely, low achieving students placed with the least effective teachers made minimum gains within that same school year. Using some of Williams L. Sanders' techniques, school officials in Dallas conducted a study that revealed when students of equitable ability levels were placed with effective or non-effective teachers consistently for three years, the students subjected to the non-effective teachers showed significant decreases in the areas of reading and math whereas there counterparts placed with effective teachers made significant gains over the course of three years (Haycock, 1998).

Parents and Individualized Education Plan (IEP)

Fischer and Schimmel (1978) described the federal government's evolution of parental rights due to Public Law 94-142. As a result of this law, parents and children are

protected by the following safeguards: access to records, prior notice of scheduled meetings that will impact any educational change to a child's IEP, communication in the parent's primary language, opportunity to a fair and impartial hearing, due process, and assignment of a surrogate parent for students who are wards of the state or whose parents are unknown or unavailable.

Fish (2008) investigated parental perceptions of IEP meetings. Participants included 51 parents of students with disabilities who were receiving services from a family support service agency. Analyzed survey results revealed positive responses pertaining to the overall IEP meeting experience for parents. Participants noted that they felt educators valued parental input and treated parents with respect and as equals during the decision making process. Participants acknowledged that having an understanding of special education law as it relates to parental rights and the IEP process proved to be critical during the IEP meeting. The author contends that the participants' increased understanding of special education law and processes could likely be contributed to the services provided by the family support service agency.

Underwood (2011) used a mixed-method approach to explore the views of parents' as they pertain to the educational experience of children with IEPs. Participants included 31 families that volunteered to participate in the study. At the time of the interview, participants completed a survey about their involvement and satisfaction as it relates to programming for their children. Results of this study yielded twenty-three themes. Themes were categorized into subtopics. Subtopics and identified themes included:

- Referral and Assessment:
  - Sought formal assessment
  - Placement or location of program
  - Funding
  - Transferred to a new school
- Programming
  - Sought resources/accommodations
  - Helped with homework
  - Hired a tutor
  - Funding (affecting program)
  - Grade retention
- Monitoring
  - Advocated for child
  - Parent knowledge of student communication
  - Balance in parent's life
- Collaboration
  - Set goals
  - Collaborated with schools
  - Volunteered at school
- Reporting
  - Met with school staff
  - IEP document

- Non-academic considerations
  - Student's independence/self-esteem
  - Student's social interactions/bullying
  - Balance in student's life
  - Labeling/stigma

Smith (2001) described the special roles that parents play in the overall educational design of their child's IEP. He indicated that parents and teachers working together effectively is a critical component to the overall development of the individualized education plan. Some of the potential benefits of parental involvement included: increasing the teacher's understanding of the child's environment, adding to parents' knowledge of child's educational setting; improving communication between parents and the school; and increasing the school's understanding of the child and increasing the likelihood that with improved understanding between home and school will result in mutually agreed upon educational goals. The author also indicated that educators should be aware of some of the reasons for some parents' lack of involvement. Many parents do not participate in their child's IEP due to communication problem/ lack of understanding of educational jargon, lack of understanding of the school system, lack of knowledge of how to help their child, and/or lack of transportation, child-care or frequent scheduling difficulties due to work or other responsibilities.

Reiman, Beck, Coppola, and Engiles (2010) gave recommendations for improving parental involvement from the perspective of parents on schools and educators, parents, and culturally and linguistically divers families. For schools and educators the authors

gathered information from several studies that gave suggestions from parents to educators and school on how they can improve the overall experiences of parents during an IEP meeting. Some of the findings from parents included: defining students in terms of strengths and weaknesses, viewing parents as equals, being open to parental input, being flexible in meetings, allowing adequate time for meetings, having a welcoming atmosphere, encouraging parents to bring educational advocates to meetings, using common terms instead of educational jargon, providing parents with a copy of the IEP prior to the meeting, and explaining procedures and legal rights. Parent participants in a study by Fish (as cited in Reiman, Beck, Coppola, & Engiles, 2010) suggested that in order for parents to be contributing members of the IEP process, they must, be knowledgeable about the special education law and the IEP process, take the initiative to educate themselves about special education issues, be persistent about requesting needs and services for their children, and to ask questions and speak up during meetings. Lastly, the research supports parental suggestions for culturally and linguistically diverse families. The suggestions include better translation and interpretive services and more communication from special education staff to interpreters before each IEP meeting, slower speech during meetings so that interpreters can have time to correctly convey information to parents, provide parents with information about their child's disability in their primary language, and taking the time to locate qualified interpreters who speak with the same dialect as the families.

Students with Disabilities

Students with disabilities, in the past, have been exempt from state accountability systems. Many argued that if these students were achieving state standards, most would not be labeled as having a disability (Hess & Petrilli, 2006). However, IDEA 1997 required that all students with disabilities were required to have access to the general curriculum and be included in state and district large-scale assessments. Thurlow (as cited in Wakeman, et al., 2007) indicated that the greatest promise of standards-based reform for students with disabilities was the improvement made in instruction and programming for students with disabilities. In 2007, the U.S Department of Education (USDE) revealed new regulations under NCLB that provided states with some flexibility of measuring students with significant cognitive disabilities (Elliott, Kettler, & Roach, 2008). If the standardized statewide assessment is not appropriate for the student, even with accommodations, their progress must be measured using an alternative assessment (Yell, et al., 2006). Specifically, if a child has a significant cognitive disability, that child may participate in an alternate assessment using their grade level standards. Students with Disabilities (SWD) who are not considered to have a significant cognitive disability are assessed using the same assessments that students without disabilities use. Most students with disabilities are held to the standards for the grade in which they are enrolled (Yell, et al., 2006). Appropriate standardized assessments and accommodations for assessments for SWD are determined by the information in each student's Individualized Education Plan (IEP).

Gender

Piechura-Couture, Heins, and Tichenor (2011) examined Single-Gender Initiatives data distributed by the South Carolina Department of Education's Office of Public School Choice. Traditionally boys are more likely to exhibit behaviors that do not fit the class norm. In the literature these authors suggest that there are three variables that contribute to the overrepresentation of boy in special education classes. Those variables include: biological factors, gender biases relating to the special education referral classification and placement processes, and lastly because boys are more active and more likely to act out or misbehave in classrooms. The data from the single-gender classroom study revealed that the majority of students, parents and teachers feel that the single-gender design positively influence boys' behavior in school, their attitude toward school, their participation in school and their ability to complete homework and class work. The results of this study suggest that the single-gender design should be explored to help diminish the overrepresentation of males and minorities in special education.

Rice, Merves, and Srsic (2008) examined a group of teachers and counselors in order to gain a greater understanding of educator perceptions of gender differences for girls identified as having an emotional and behavioral disabilities (EBD). Several reports have indicated that there are unique needs for girls in our society. Research pertaining to special education and programming for girls with EBD is significantly rare. A multitude of factors contribute to the underidentifcation of girls for EBD services. In this study, participants were interviewed face-to-face using a semi-structured interview protocol. Participants included teachers, administrators, and counselors that had at least six months

of direct experience working with both girls and boys within the last three years. The study yielded six emerging themes. The authors contend that respondents generally viewed girls with EBD as having problems that are less visible but more intense, being more isolated, acting more intensely when they are physical, and having fewer friends. Participants in this study seemed to differentiate the work that they do with girls with EBD and the work done with boys with EBD. Girls with EBD continue to be an understudied population in the field of special education.

Ethnicity and Socioeconomic Status

Kearns, Ford, and Linney (2005) conducted at study that included the perspective of school psychologists located in the Southern region of the United States on the disproportionate representation of African-American students in special education classes due to a diagnosis of having a mild intellectual disability. The U. S. Department of Education reported in 1994 that African Americans account for approximately 17% of the public school population, but they make of 33% of all students with a mental disability, 27% of Severe Emotionally Disturbed (SED), and 18% of students with learning disabilities, this data suggests that African-American students may be over-identified in special education. The authors content that several factors contribute tot the over-representation of African-American students receiving special education services. Some of those factors include: lack of cultural exposure, disparity between African-American learning styles and classroom pedagogy, the notion of genetic inferiority and effects of racism, and apathy and self-concept among African-American students. The findings in this study revealed from the ratings that participants viewed (a) cultural disadvantages

and (b) low parental involvement in education as the two most significant factors affecting the disproportionate representation of African-American students into special education.

Hibel, Farkas, and Morgan (2010) analyzed the data from the Early Childhood Longitudinal Study, Kindergarten Class of 1998-1999 (ECLS-K) in order to empirically estimate how a range of student-, family-, and school-level factors shape a student's probability of being placed into special education. The authors noted that Oswald and colleagues (1999), Hosp and Reschly (2003), and Skiba and colleagues (2005) found that race and ethnicity continued to be statistically significant predictors of special education placement. Although there have been studies conducted at school district levels, according to the Hibel et al., no nationally representative study has "statistically controlled for an extensive number of individual-, family-, and school-level convariates in attempting to determine whether a child's race/ethnicity elevates his or her likelihood of being placed in special education" (p. 314). Hibel et al. further contend that class and race effects on special education placement are further complicated by the greater exposure of lower income. Factors such as "biological trauma," "social trauma," teenage parents, or parents with additional risk factors contribute to lower cognitive functioning and increased behavioral concerns. Lastly the authors contend, "The lower academic performance of low SES and ethnic minority children elevates their likelihood of special education placement" (p. 316).

Strand and Lindsay (2009) examined the evidence of ethnic dispropotionality in Special Education in an English population. They reported that the highest levels of

overrepresentation in special education have been found for the disability areas of mental retardation and emotional disturbance and with respect to ethnic groups, African Americans and American Indian students seem to be overrepresented. The authors assert that both overrepresentation and underrepresentation are problematic if they are associated with reduced access to the most appropriate forms of education. The authors also revealed through their review of the literature that for English Language Learners (ELL) disproportionalities varied. ELL students with limited proficiency in both their first language and English were four times as likely to be placed in language and speech impairment programs than ELL students with limited proficiency in only English. The conclusions revealed in this study indicated that there is an ethnic disproportionality with respect to the students with disabilities, but the results only partially replicate the studies conducted in the United States. The author offered five implications for policy practice, and research for the United Kingdom as well as the United States. Those implications included: (a) use pupil-level rather than district-level data, (b) disaggregate the ethnic categories so that data has greater specificity, (c) collect and analyze data at both the local and national levels to identify patterns comprehensively, (d) the importance of poverty, gender, and ethnicity should be considered when devising policy, and (e) there is a need to distinguish the relative importance of different causal factors, such as biological and environmental factors.

Reading

Wei, Blackorby, and Schiller (2011) conducted a study that examined the reading growth trajectories of K-to-12 students grouped under different IDEA disability areas

across the United States. The researchers used the Special Education Elementary Longitudinal Study (SEELS) to follow the progress in reading for a national sample of students with disabilities. Data were collected in three waves of collection periods via telephone interview with parents, mailed surveys, and direct assessments of students' abilities. The SEELS assessed student reading achievement via research editions of two subtests of the Woodcock-Johnson Test of Achievement. The subtests used were the WJ III Letter Word Identification, which measures letter and word identification skills and the WJ III Passage Comprehension, which measures language comprehension and reading skills using a cloze procedure. Results of this study indicated similar rates of growth but differential mean reading achievement across disability categories. Although reading growth is comparable across disability categories, there are large differences among categories in reading achievement. NCLB's one-size-fit-all approach ignores the differences among disability categories. By combining all disability categories into one subgroup, the instructional challenges faced by educators teaching children with varying disabilities are masked. The researchers concluded that the disability categories studied were heterogeneous with respect to reading achievement. Wide differences in mean achievement were not found in growth in reading as students progress through their school years; even when starting at varying levels, they gain about the same amount on standardized reading measures.

Melekoglu (2011) conducted an investigation on the impact of motivation to read on reading gains of struggling readers with and without specific learning disabilities. The Adolescent Motivation to Read Survey (AMRS) was used to assess students' motivation

to read. A quasi-experimental one-group pretest-posttest design without a control group was used to examine if reading motivation of struggling readers with and without LD who were taught using a structured, research-based reading program significantly correlated with their reading gains after eighteen weeks of instruction. The results indicated that LD students made gains in reading over the course of the study, but only one participant scored at the proficient level at the posttest, all LD participants made gains, but still performed below their current grade level. Overall, the findings of this study support the notions that many students with LD profoundly struggle with basic reading/reading comprehension skills and that they exhibit low motivation to read.

Summary of the Review of Literature

The review of literature supports the notion that student achievement, as it relates to students with disabilities, is influenced the following variables: federal legislation, state policy, local education agencies, school leadership, highly qualified teachers, parents and IEP, students with disabilities, gender, ethnicity and socioeconomic status, English language learners, and reading.

Since 2001, schools have been required to demonstrate adequate yearly progress for all elementary and secondary students including students with disabilities (Anderson, 2005). Each state is required to analyze the achievement of the selected subgroups including students with disabilities (Hess & Petrilli, 2006). In the area of local education agencies, The Wallace Foundation (2011) outlined school districts' role in turning around low performing schools, Howard and Rice-Crenshaw (2006) found that total commitment to change by the school district contributed to the growth in student achievement, and

lastly Terry (2010) found that school districts' routine responses to educational reform mandates are not enough to produce deep changes in educational practice. The literature revealed that school leadership in American culture lends heavily towards the trait theory in terms of indicating the success of leaders, it also revealed that transactional and transformational leadership both play important roles in increasing student achievement (Elmore, 2000; Pepper, 2010). In addition, Crum, Sherman, and Myran (2009) and Gardiner, Canfield-Davis, and Anderson (2008) conducted studies that listed emerging themes that relate to principals experiencing success during this time of accountability and NCLB. NCLB requires that all schools receiving federal funds have highly qualified teachers teaching core academic subjects (U.S. Department of Education, Office of Postsecondary Education, 2002). Blank, et al. (2004) outlined the requirements for teachers to meet the standard of HQT. Darling-Hammond AND Baratz-Snowden (2007), Thompson and Smith (2005), and Haycock (1998) all conducted studies that highlighted the advantages of having highly qualified teachers in classrooms. The importance of parents and IEP were confirmed by the works of Fischer and Schimmel (1978), Fish (2008), Underwood (2011), Smith (2001), and Reiman, Beck, Coppola, and Engiles (2010). Since the inception of NCLB students with disabilities have been required to take state mandated assessments like there non-disabled peers. If the state mandated assessments are deemed inappropriate by a students' IEP team, they will be assessed using an alternate assessment using their grade level standards (Yell, et al., 2006). Piechura-Couture, Heins, and Tichenor (2011) examined Single-Gender Initiatives data distributed by the South Carolina Department of Education's Office of Public School

Choice. They found three variables that contribute to the overrepresentation of boy in special education classes. Those variables include: biological factors, gender biases relating to the special education referral classification and placement processes, and lastly because boys are more active and more likely to act out or misbehave in classrooms. Hibel, Farkas, and Morgan (2010) concluded that "The lower academic performance of low SES and ethnicity minority children elevate their likelihood of special education placement" (p. 316). Lastly, Melekoglu (2011) conducted an investigation on the impact of motivation to read on reading gains of struggling readers with and without specific learning disabilities. Overall, the findings of this study support the notions that many students with LD profoundly struggle with basic reading/reading comprehension skills and that they exhibit low motivation to read.

CHAPTER III

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

The researcher examined students with disabilities performance on the State required Criterion-Referenced Competency Test in the areas of Reading and Math and the AYP statues of selected Title I schools in relation to student gender, ethnicity, disability area, socioeconomic status, and time in special education.

Research Design

A QUAN-QUAL Model was used in this research study. According to Gay, Mills, and Airasian (2009), the QUAN-QUAL Model, also known as the triangulation mixed methods design, is described as when quantitative and qualitative data are "equally weighted and are collected concurrently throughout the study" (p. 463). The quantitative portion of the research study focused on the possible relationships that may exist between selected variables that may impact the performance of students with disabilities at selected Title I schools. The research design required the use of the correlation, descriptive statistical analysis, and semistructured purposefully selected interviews based upon survey results.

Theory of Variables

Quantitative

When reviewing the literature some of the themes that emerged as it relates to factors that contribute to the performance of students with disabilities on state mandated

assessments included, but are not limited to, gender, ethnicity, disability area, socioeconomic status, and time in special education. There are notable differences in the performance of boys verses girls on state assessments. Performances on statewide assessments also vary as it relates to student ethnicity. There are also noted differences in performance based on students' with disabilities eligibility area. Some studies have also revealed that students in different socioeconomic statuses perform at varying levels. Lastly, time and level of placement in special education are also believed to be contributing factors to student performance on state mandated assessments. Figure 1 illustrates the theoretical framework of this study.

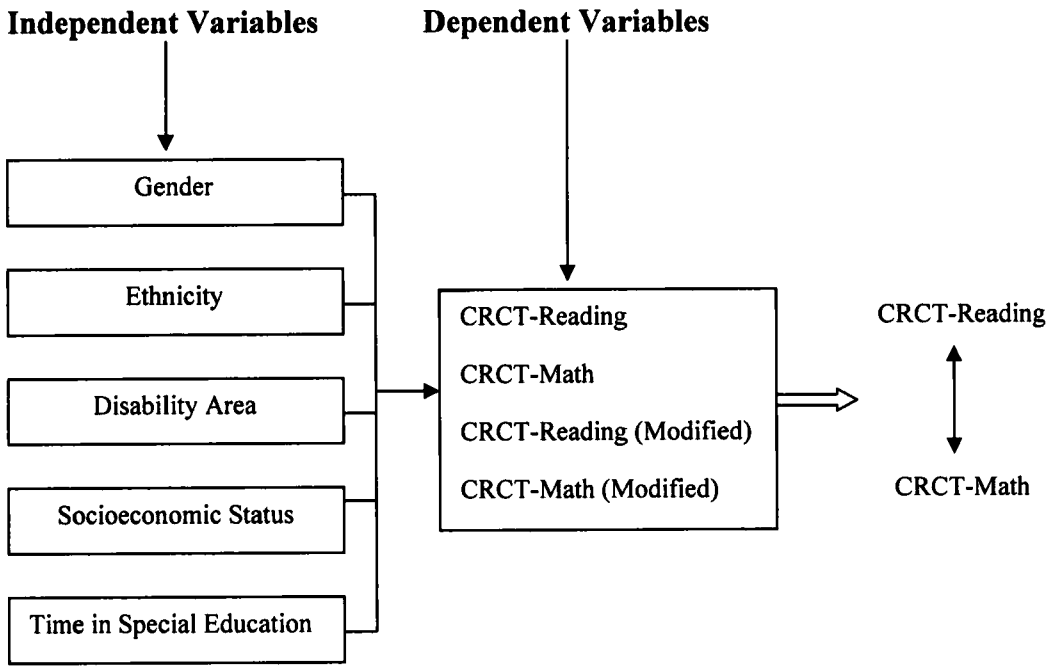

Figure 1. Theoretical Framework

Qualitative

Two landmark cases changed the face of education. Pennsylvania Association for Retarded Children (P.A.R.C) vs. Commonwealth of Pennsylvania (1971) 13 parents challenged the state's position on excluding mentally retarded children from public schools. In the case of Mills vs. Board of Education of District of Columbia (1972), plaintiffs challenged the practices of schools excluding, suspending, expelling, reassigning and transferring students without due process (Zettel, 1977). The outcomes of these two cases lead to what is now known as Public Law 94-142 (PL 94-142) or the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA). Since the enactment of PL-142, all States have been charged with ensuring that students with disabilities receive a free and appropriate public education (FAPE). The No Child Left Behind Act of 2001 added additional responsibilities to each State Department of Education. As of 2002, each state is now required by law to ensure that students with disabilities meet or exceed standards on state assessment tools. This new Act also requires local education agencies to have highly qualified teachers in every classroom. School leadership personnel are currently held accountable for ensuring that the requirements of NCLB at the local level are being met. Special Education teachers and administrators are charged with ensuring that students' IEPs were addressing students' needs and including the appropriate accommodations when taking state mandated tests. Figure 2 illustrates the conceptual framework of this study.

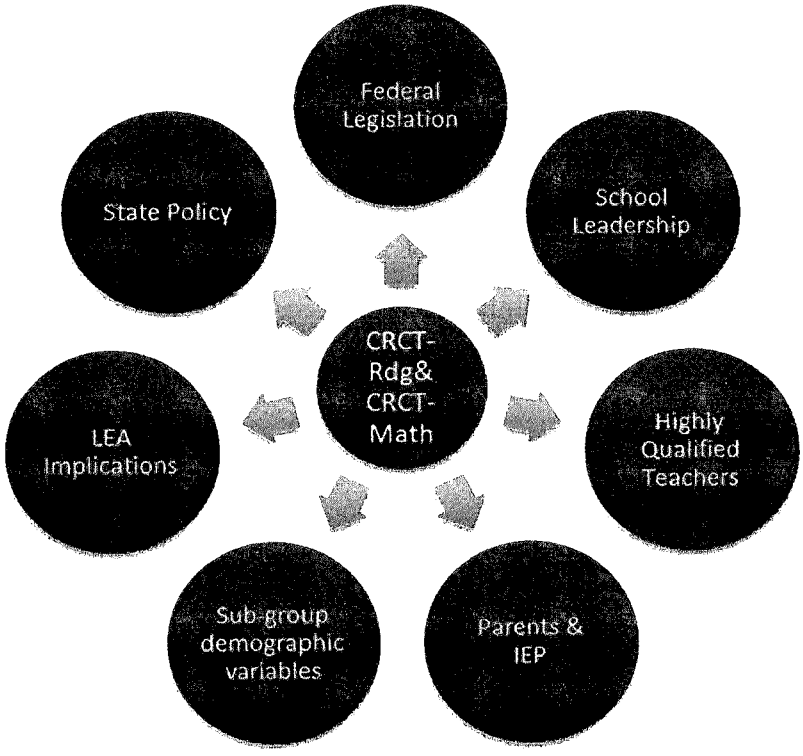

Figure 2. Conceptual Framework

Definition of Variables and Selected Terms

Quantitative

Gender is defined as the state of being male or female; the behavioral, cultural, or emotional traits typically associated with one sex.

Ethnicity is defined as an affiliation with a particular ethnic group. For the purpose of this study, ethnicity will be determined by the information for race as reported by the parent on the district enrollment form.

Disability area is defined as the primary disability listed on the student's IEP (mild intellectual disabled, moderate intellectual disabled, deaf, hearing impaired, autistic, specific learning disability speech and language impaired, emotional behavior

disorder, autistic, other health impaired, orthopedically impaired, traumatic brain injury, blind, and visually impaired).

Socioeconomic Status (SES) is defined the by district categorization students using information provided by the parent upon enrollment. Each student is categorized to receive free, reduced, or full price lunch. Student SES is one of the following: Low (free lunch), Medium (reduced lunch), or High (Full price lunch).

Time in Special Education is defined as the amount of time that students spend receiving instruction from a special education teacher in a small group, team-taught, or individualized setting. The two levels will be coded as level 1 (self-contained) or level 2 (resource). Self-contained consist of a student receiving 4 to 6 segments of special education instruction per day. Resource is defined as a student receiving 1 to 3 segments of special education instruction per day.

Qualitative

Federal Legislation is defined as enforceable laws passed by the United States Congress.

State Policy is defined as the process by which federal and state laws are carried out.

Local Education Agencies (LEA). For the purpose of this study the LEA is defined as the school in which the student participants in the study attended at the time the study was conducted. LEA is also defined as a public board of education or other public authority within a state which maintains administrative control of public

elementary or secondary schools in a city, county, township, school district or other political subdivision of a state (U.S. Department of Education, 2012).

Highly Qualified Teachers (HQT). For the purpose of this study, HQT are those teachers that have met the requirements of the state and are currently teaching subjects that they have been deemed qualified to teach according to the provisions of their current teaching certificate.

Parents. For the purpose of this study, parents are adults that have been identified by the LEA as having the authority to participate and make decisions regarding the education of a student with a disability.

Individualized Education Plan (IEP). An individualized program for students with disabilities that includes (a) a statement of the child's present levels of education performance, (b) a statement of annual goals, including short-term instructional objectives, (c) a statement of specific education services to be provided and the extent to which the child will be able to participate in regular education programs, (d) a projected date for initiation and anticipated duration of services, and (e) appropriate objectives, criteria, and evaluation procedures and schedules for determining, on at least and annual basis, whether instructional objectives are being achieved (U.S. Department of Education, 2012).

School Leadership is defined as principals and other school administrators that are charged with overseeing the development and execution of federal legislation and state policy as they relate to building management and student academic performance.

Student Reading performance is defined as the level in which students meet, exceed, or do not meet standards in Reading as presented on the Georgia Criterion Referenced Competency Test.

Student Math performance is defined as the level in which students meet, exceed, or do not meet standards in Math as presented on the Georgia Criterion Referenced Competency Test.

Other Definitions

Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) is defined as the measurement that is outlined by the state to measure year-to-year student academic achievement on statewide assessments (Georgia Department of Education, 2012c).

Annual Measurable Objectives (AMO) is defined as the required percentage of students in each school and each student subgroup that must meet or exceed the state standards on the CRCT in Reading, Language Arts, and Mathematics. The minimum size required to be considered a student subgroup is forty or ten percent of the student population, whichever is greater (Georgia Department of Education, 2012c).

Criterion-Referenced Competency Test (CRCT) is defined as a state mandated assessment designed to measure how well students retain the skills and knowledge as outlined in the Georgia Performance Standards (Georgia Department of Education, 2012c).

Free and Appropriate Public Education (FAPE) is defined as a requirement under Section 504 of The Rehabilitation Act of 1973. FAPE requires school districts to

provide each person with a disability, regardless of the severity of the disability, with a free and appropriate education (U.S. Department of Education, 2001).

Georgia Alternate Assessment (GAA) is defined as an assessment tool used by the Georgia Department of Education to measure students with significant cognitive disabilities progress toward meeting academic standards. The GAA is a portfolio of student work that enables the demonstration of achievement and progress relative to selected skills that are aligned to the Georgia curriculum.

Georgia Performance Standards (GPS) is defined as statements that provide clear expectations for assessment, instruction, and student work. They specifically define the level of work that demonstrates achievement of the standards (Georgia Department of Education, 2012b).

No Child Left Behind (NCLB). Public Law 107-110 is an amendment of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965. It is an educational reform that embodies four key principles: stronger accountability for results; greater flexibility for states, school districts; and schools in the use of federal funds; school choice for parents of children from disadvantaged backgrounds; and an emphasis on teaching methods that have proven to work.

Public Law 94-142 (PL 94-142), Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) is a U.S. federal law that ensures services to children with disabilities (U.S. Department of Education).

Students with Disabilities (SWD) is defined as a child with cognitive disabilities, hearing impairments, speech/language impairments, visual impairments,

emotional behavioral impairment, orthopedic impairments, autism, traumatic brain injury, other health impairments, or specific learning disabilities (U.S. Department of Education, 2002).

Relationship among the Variables

Figures 3 and 4 show the quantitative and qualitative relationships among the variables of this study.

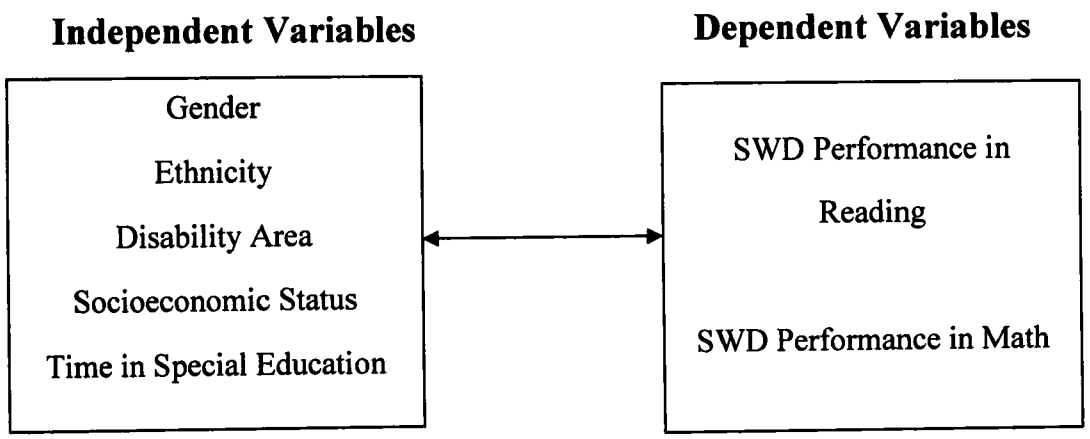

Figure 3. Quantitative Relationship among the Variables

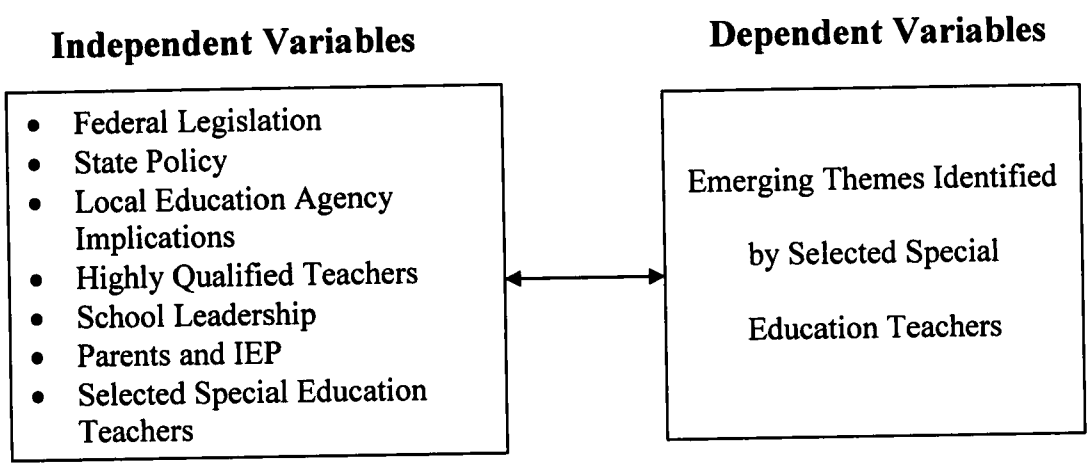

Figure 4. Qualitative Relationship among the Variables

Research Questions

RQ1: In the selected Title I schools, is there a significant difference between students with disabilities (SWDs) CRCT test scores and their special education setting?

RQ2: In the selected Title I schools, is there a significant difference between students with disabilities CRCT test scores and their gender?

RQ3: What is the performance outcome of SWDs of each disability area of the selected Title I schools?

RQ4: Is there a significant relationship between the Reading levels on the CRCT and math levels on the CRCT for the SWDs in grades 3 thru 8 at selected Title I schools?

RQ5: From the dependent variable of reading for SWDs at the selected Title I schools, is there a statistically significant relationship among the dependent and selected variables?

RQ6: From the dependent variable math for SWDs at the selected Title I schools, is there a statistically significant relationship among the dependent and selected variables?

RQ7: What are the perceptions of selected teachers on the performance of SWDs on the CRCT in reading and math?

Summary

The purpose of this study was to examine students with disabilities performance on the State required Criterion-Referenced Competency Test in the areas of Reading and

Math in selected Title I schools in relation to student gender, ethnicity, disability area, socioeconomic status, and time in special education. The research design, theory of the variables, definition of the variables, and other definitions are outlined in this chapter.

CHAPTER IV

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Students with disabilities failure to meet annual measurable objectives on state assessments as defined by No Child Left Behind (NCLB) has prevented many Title I schools in the State of Georgia from making adequate yearly progress (AYP) (Georgia Department of Education, 2012). According to the Georgia Department of Education, in 2011, 21% of third grade, 33% of forth grade, 28% of fifth grade, 25% of sixth grade, 33% of seventh grade, and 18% of eighth grade students with disabilities who took the Georgia Criterion-Reference Competency Test (CRCT) did not meet state standards in Reading. During that same year, 40% of third grade, 42% of forth grade, 37% of fifth grade, 55% of sixth grade, 35% of seventh grade, and 54% of eight grade students with disabilities did not meet state standards in mathematics (Georgia Department of Education, 2012). NCLB requires that all students meet state standards, therefore; this study focused on the selected variables and instructional strategies that teachers used in order to prepare their students for the Georgia CRCT and to meet the goals and objectives outlined in each student's Individualized Education Plan (IEP).

This chapter contains information that describes the type of research design that was used in the study, the description of the setting, the sampling procedures, information on working with human subjects, the selected instrumentation that was used by the researcher, the participation and location of the research, the intended data collection

procedures, statistical applications and a description of the data analysis methods. The expected benefits from this study include identifying selected variables that impact students with disabilities (SWD) performance on the State mandated Georgia Criterion-Reference Competency Test and self-reported instructional strategies used by purposefully selected Regular Education and Special Education teachers at selected Title I schools identified for this study. There were 31 teachers who responded voluntarily to the teacher survey.

Research Design

A QUAN-QUAL Model was in this research study. According to Gay, Mills, and Airasian (2009), the QUAN-QUAL Model, also known as the triangulation mixed methods design, is described as when quantitative and qualitative data are "equally weighted and are collected concurrently throughout the study" (p. 463). The quantitative portion of the research study focused on the possible relationships that may exist between selected variables that may impact student performance of students with disabilities at selected Title I schools. The research design required the use of the correlation, descriptive statistical analysis, and semistructured purposefully selected interviews based upon survey results.

From the correlational research design procedures, the researcher's collection of data sought to ascertain whether, and to what degree, a relationship exists between two or more quantifiable variables (Gay, Mills, & Airasian, 2009). The purpose of the qualitative portion of the study was to examine whether special education teachers' instructional strategies influence the outcomes of students with disabilities test scores on

the Georgia Criterion Reference Competency Test. Using a survey questionnaire followed by a semistructured follow-up interview conducted by the researcher, the researcher analyzed the data to ascertain if there is any significance. The phenomenological approach was used in order to determine the experiences of special education teachers as they deliver instruction and the effectiveness of their selected methods of instructional delivery to students with disabilities. The purpose of the phenomenological approach was to identify phenomena through how they are perceived by those in the given situation (Lester, 1999). By using this type of approach, the researcher was able to analyze the meaning of each participants experience and record any emerging themes that may arise (Creswell, 2007).

Description of the Setting

The data used in this study are from a large Metropolitan School district in the Southeast region of the United States. Overall demographic data, state and district assessments, accountability policies, and special education accommodations and placement policies were obtained from the state and district websites. To protect the identity of the Local Education Agency (LEA), these sources will not be cited in this paper. The district in this study was selected for its diversity, size and accessibility. The district has more than 92,000 students. Of the district's total school-aged population, 42% African-American, 34% white, 11% Hispanic, 9% Asian, 4% Multiracial, and less than 1% Native American. The district has 58 elementary, 19 middle, 16 high schools and 6 start-up charter schools. Three schools, two elementary schools and one middle school, were purposefully selected by the researcher to participate in the study. Two of

the three schools; one elementary school and one middle school, agreed to participate in the study.

Sampling Procedures

The type of sampling that was used in this study is defined as purposive sampling. Purposive sampling, according to Gay, Mills, and Airasian (2009), is defined as "the process of selecting a sample that is believed to be representative of a given population" (p.134).

Working with Human Subjects

The researcher was granted permission from the purposefully selected school system to review student achievement data within the district. The school system's identity will not be revealed to ensure anonymity for all selected participants in the study. Teachers that participated in the survey and interview process were informed that they had the right to discontinue or withdraw from the study at any time.

Instrumentation

The instrument used to assess selected variables that impact students with disabilities performance was the Georgia Criterion Referenced Competency Test (CRCT). The relationships among the variables were drawn from the data collection from the results of the CRCT scores for the 2011-2012 school year. A survey instrument, developed by the researcher, included 18 questions that related to teacher demographics, teacher perception of school leaders, and parental involvement. A semi-structured

interview protocol was used to interview selected survey participants to ascertain their perceptions of leadership style and parental involvement.

Participation/Location of Research

Participants for this study were students with disabilities in grades 3 through 8 in selected Title I schools in a suburban school district, general education teachers and special education teachers who teach at the aforementioned selected Title I schools. The participating schools were purposefully selected due to the researcher's observation of students with disabilities in the natural school setting, observed phenomena of teaching and learning, and detection of perceived variables that appeared to impact student achievement. The researcher obtained permission through the following: (a) obtained the IRB approval from Clark Atlanta University prior to submitting an application for research study, (b) completed the application for research study from the selected school district, (c) obtained permission from the principal of the school in which you conducted research (if needed), (d) submitted a copy of the research proposal along with the application to the school district.

Data Collection Procedures

Statistical Applications/Description of Data Analysis Methods

Quantitative

After gaining permission from the school district, the researcher obtained CRCT data and student demographic data from school personnel that have access to student data. After collecting the CRCT test score data and student demographic data, the researcher entered the collected data into an Excel spreadsheet. Once data were gathered

and coded, the researcher input data in SPSS (Statistical Package for the Social Sciences) import. Once SPSS report was completed, the researcher analyzed the data.

Qualitative

A survey was distributed by the researcher to general education and special education teachers that had students participating in the research study. The teachers were given a one-week window to complete the survey. The researcher followed up via email to remind teachers to complete the survey during the one-week window (see appendix for survey, timeline, and protocol). After the submission of the surveys, the researcher analyzed and interpreted the results. Teachers from the study were purposefully selected to participate in an individual interview with the researcher. Five teachers were selected to participate in the interview portion of the study; they included two teachers from the elementary school and three teachers from the middle school. Teachers were interviewed in person in their individual classrooms. The interview questions were semi-structured used to ascertain each teachers' perception of SWDs performance on the CRCT, teachers' perceptions of SWDs experiences in the regular education and special education settings, and each teachers' perception of their school administrator's support of SWDs within their schools. The format of the semistructure interviews was the same for each teacher with the exception of questions 8 and 9. Teachers only responded to both questions if they taught both reading and math. Those teachers who only taught one of the two subjects was only asked to answer either question 8 or 9 depending on which subject taught. The results of the interviews were then analyzed and interpreted by the researcher. The data gathered from the survey and

interviews are included in the results section of this research document. An interview protocol (see appendix) outlined the questions asked during the interview.

Limitations of the Study

The limitations to this study included the following. First, analyses were limited to students with disabilities from a single public school district located in one Metropolitan area from an elementary and feeder middle school. Secondly, this study was limited to students in grades three through eight from one local educational agency within a Southern state. Next, previous Georgia CRCT test performance data cannot be compared to 2011 data due to the CRCT-M being added to the testing options for students with disabilities. In addition, teaching styles varied due to the students having various teachers that use different teaching techniques. Lastly, the purposefully selection of the interview participants was driven by cooperation of the participants who participated in the survey and limitation of the number available for interview.

Delimitations of the Study

It may be argued that the metric devised to accommodate SWDs beginning with the 2011-2012 school year may prove to be delimitation in future research. The delimitation of the survey instrument is that it was based upon the perceptions of what all of the teachers who serve SWDs within the two purposefully selected schools which totaled over 30 participants; therefore it may be argued that it is a valid and reliable sample drawn from that population sample.

Summary

Students with disabilities failure to meet annual measurable objectives on the CRCT have been reportedly the reason that some Title I schools have failed to consistently make AYP in the state of Georgia since 2006 (Georgia Department of Education, 2012). As a result, the purpose of this study was to examine the extent of the relationship of the CRCT scores in reading and math for students with disabilities and purposefully selected independent variables in selected Title I schools. Using data from the Georgia CRCT scores and information obtained from teachers about specific strategies used for intervention, the researcher analyzed the data to ascertain if there is any significance.

CHAPTER V

ANALYSIS OF THE DATA

The purpose of this study was to examine the extent of the relationship of the CRCT scores in reading and math for students with disabilities and purposefully selected independent variables in selected Title I schools.

Overview of Data Collection and Analysis

Data were collected in three ways: standardized assessment results, teacher survey, and teacher interviews (see Figure 5). Standardized assessment results were obtained from appropriate school personnel within the participating school district's assessment department. Standardized assessment data included SWD scores from the CRCT and CRCT-M, as determined by the IEP team, in the areas of reading and math. Student demographic information included in assessment data were: grade, gender, ethnicity, socioeconomic status, disability area, and time in special education. The teacher surveys were distributed to purposefully selected teachers that were employed during the 2011-2012 school year at the selected Title I schools, all participants are also currently employed for the school district and all are assigned to the same school. The survey was designed to solicit teacher perception about administrators' leadership style and parental involvement. Selected teachers that completed a survey participated in semistructured interviews that were conducted in the teachers' natural setting (teacher's classroom) for approximately 15 minutes and recorded digitally by the researcher.

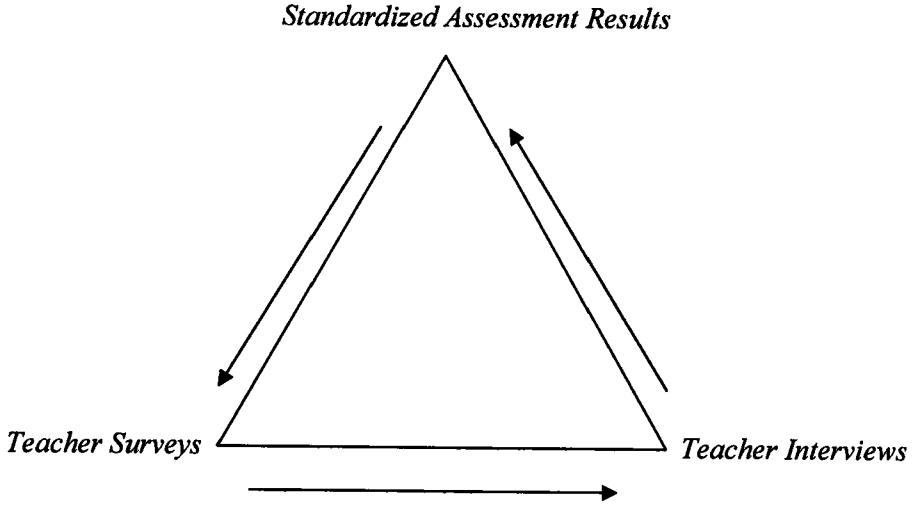

Figure 5. Triangulation of Data

Profiles of Study Participants

This section provides a summary of the setting of each group of participants. This information is germane for establishing an awareness of the setting that the students and teachers inhabit for the purposes of teaching and learning.

Table 2 describes the demographic information for the participating Title I schools. Each school was purposefully selected from a large suburban school district in the Southeast region of the United States. School 1 is a Title I Elementary School with the following profile: 546 students in grades PK – 5, 12% SWD population, 20% ELL population, 94% FRL (Free and Reduced Lunch), and a 52% mobility rate. School 2 is a Title I Middle school with the following profile: 890 students in grades 6 – 8, 13% SWD population, 4% ELL population, 85% FRL, and a 67% mobility rate.

Table 2

Demographic Information for Participating Title I Schools

	School 1	School 2
Level	Elementary	Middle
Number of Students	546	890
Percent of Students with Disabilities	12	13
Percent of English Language Learners (ELL)	20	4
Percent of Students on Free and Reduced Lunch (Economically Disadvantaged)	94	85
Mobility Rate	52	67

Figures 6 and 7 describe the race/ethnic distribution for the participating Title I schools for the 2011-12 school year. The categories represented for School 1 include: African American/black 57%, Hispanic 39%, white 3%, and multiracial 1%. The categories represented for School 2 include: African American/black 76%, Hispanic 19%, white 2%, multiracial 2%, and Asian 1%.

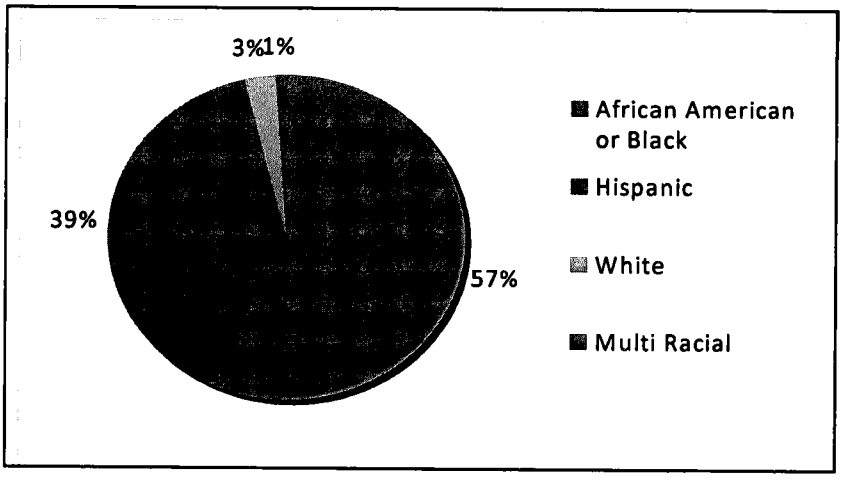

Figure 6: School 1—Race/Ethnic Distribution, 2011-2012 School Year

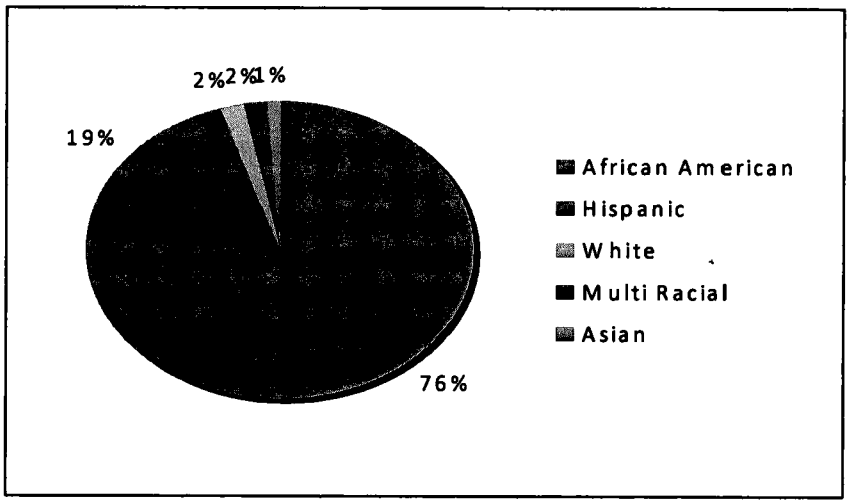

Figure 7. School 2—Race/Ethnic Distribution, 2011-2012 School Year

Survey Participants

The following tables reveal the demographic information of the survey participants (n = 31). This section explains the description of the survey participants and reveals the correlation of the demographic variables among themselves as well as how they relate to Leadership Style and Parental Involvement at selected Title I schools.

Ethnicity

Table 3 shows the total number of participants by ethnicity. The data of demographic variable are as follows: African American 90.3% (n = 28), Asian = 3.2% (n = 1), and white = 6.5% (n = 2).

Table 3

Survey Participants' Demographic Variable: Ethnicity

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	African American	28	90.3	90.3	90.3
	Asian	1	3.2	3.2	93.5
	White	2	6.5	6.5	100.0
	Total	31	100.0	100.0	

Gender

Table 4 shows the total number of participants by gender. The data demographics are as follows: Male 16.1% (n = 5) and Female 83.9% (n = 26).

Table 4

Survey Participants' Demographic Variable: Gender

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Male	5	16.1	16.1	16.1
	Female	26	83.9	83.9	100.0
	Total	31	100.0	100.0	

GrLevelSPED

Table 5 shows the total number of participants by special education teacher and the grade level in which they taught. The data demographics are as follows: Third = 3.2% (n = 1); fourth = 3.2% (n = 1); fifth = 3.2% (n = 1); sixth = 6.5% (n = 2); seventh = 9.6% (n = 3); and eighth = 9.6% (n = 3).

Table 5

Survey Participants' Demographic Variable: Number of Special Education Teachers

	Grade Level	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	3rd	1	3.2	3.2	3.2
	4th	1	3.2	3.2	6.5
	5th	1	3.2	3.2	9.6
	6th	2	6.5	6.5	16.1
	7th	3	9.6	9.6	25.7
	8th	3	9.6	9.6	35.3
	Special Education	20	64.5	64.5	100.0
	Total	31	100.0	100.0	

GrLevelRegTeach

Table 6 shows the total number of participants by regular education teacher and the grade level in which they taught. The data demographics are as follows: third = 16.1% (n = 5), fourth = 9.7% (n = 3), fifth = 12.9% (n = 4), sixth = 6.5% (n = 2), seventh = 9.6% (n = 3), and eighth = 9.6% (n = 3).

Table 6

Survey Participants' Demographic Variable: Number of Regular Education Teachers

	Grade Level	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	3rd	5	16.1	16.1	16.1
	4th	3	9.7	9.7	25.8

(continued)

Table 6 (continued)

Grade Level	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
5th	4	12.9	12.9	38.7
6th	2	6.5	6.5	45.2
7th	3	9.6	9.6	54.7
8th	3	9.6	9.6	64.3
Regular Education	11	35.4	35.4	100.0
Total	31	100.0	100.0	

TeachExp

Table 7 shows the total number of participants by the years of the teacher experience. The data demographics are as follows: 0-5 years 9.7% (n = 3), 6-10 years 25.8% (n = 8), 11-15 years 32.3% (n = 10), 16-20 years 12.9% (n = 4), and 26+ years 19.4% (n = 6).

Table 7

Survey Participants' Demographic Variable: Teacher Years of Experience

	Years of Experience	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	0-5yr	3	9.7	9.7	9.7
	6-10yr	8	25.8	25.8	35.5
	11-15yr	10	32.3	32.3	67.7
	16-20yr	4	12.9	12.9	80.6
	26+	6	19.4	19.4	100.0
	Total	31	100.0	100.0	

SubjSPED

Table 8 shows the total number of participants by special education teacher and the subject in which they taught. The data demographics are as follows: Reading 9.7% (n = 3); English Language Arts 6.5% (n = 2); Math 3.2% (n = 1); Science 3.2% (n = 1); Social Studies 3.2% (n = 1); more than one 6.5% (n = 2), and All subjects 3.2% (n = 1).

Table 8

Survey Participants' Demographic Variable: Subjects Taught by Special Education Teachers

	Subject Taught	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Reading	3	9.7	9.7	9.7
	English Language Arts	2	6.5	6.5	16.1
	Math	1	3.2	3.2	19.4
	Science	1	3.2	3.2	22.6
	Social Science	1	3.2	3.2	25.8
	>1	2	6.5	6.5	32.3
	All	1	3.2	3.2	35.5
	Special Education	20	64.5	64.5	100.0
	Total	31	100.0	100.0	

SubjRegTeach

Table 9 shows the total number of participants by regular education teacher and the subject in which they taught. The data demographics are as follows: Reading 12.9% (n = 4); English Language Arts 6.5% (n = 2); Math 19.4% (n = 6); Science 6.5% (n = 2); and more than one 19.4% (n = 6).

Table 9

Survey Participants' Demographic Variable: Subjects Taught by Regular Education Teachers

	Subject	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Reading	4	12.9	12.9	12.9
	English Language Arts	2	6.5	6.5	19.4
	Math	6	19.4	19.4	38.7
	Science	2	6.5	6.5	45.2
	>1	6	19.4	19.4	64.5
	Regular Education	11	35.5	35.5	100.0
	Total	31	100.0	100.0	

Table 10 shows the total number of participants by teacher certification. The data demographics are the following: T-4 9.7% (n = 3); T-5 67.7%, T-6 16.1% (n = 5); and T-7 6.5% (n = 2).

Table 10

Survey Participants' Demographic Variable: Teacher Certification

	Teacher Certification	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	T-4	3	9.7	9.7	9.7
	T-5	21	67.7	67.7	77.4
	T-6	5	16.1	16.1	93.5
	T-7	2	6.5	6.5	100.0
	Total	31	100.0	100.0	

Teacher Survey Correlations

In this section, the following tables describe the correlations revealed in the teacher surveys.

Ethnicity

Ethnicity and Gender have a correlation of -.033 and a significance of .860; therefore, there is no significant relationship but there is an inverse relationship between the variables (see Table 11).

Ethnicity and GrLevelSPED have a correlation of -.237 and a significance of .199; therefore, there is no significant relationship but there is an inverse relationship between the variables.

Ethnicity and GrLevelRegTeach have a correlation of .278 and a significance of .129; therefore, there is no significant relationship.

Ethnicity and TeachExp have a correlation of -.319 and a significance of .080; therefore, there is no significant relationship but there is an inverse relationship between the variables.

Ethnicity and SubjSPED have a correlation of .018 and a significance of .924; therefore, there is no significant relationship.

Ethnicity and SubjRegTeach have a correlation of .060 and a significance of .747; therefore, there is no significant relationship.

Ethnicity and TeachCert have a correlation of .094 and a significance of .616; therefore, there is no significant relationship.

Table 11

Teacher Survey Correlation: Ethnicity

	Ethnicity	Gender	GrLevelSPED	GrLevelRegTeach	TeachExp
Ethnicity					
Pearson Correlation	1	-.033	-.237	.278	-.319
Sig (2-tailed)		.860	.199	.129	.080
N	31	31	31	31	31
	SubSPED	SubRegTeach	TeachCert	LeadershipStyle	ParentInvolve
Pearson Correlation	.018	.060	.094	-.044	.144
Sig (2-tailed)	.924	.747	.616	.815	.439
N	31	31	31	31	31

Ethnicity and LeadershipStyle have a correlation of -.044 and a significance of .815; therefore, there is no significant relationship but there is an inverse relationship between the variables.

Ethnicity and ParentInvolve have a correlation of .144 and a significance of .439; therefore, there is no significant relationship.

Gender

Gender and GrLevelSPED have a correlation of -.034 and a significance of .857; therefore, there is no significant relationship but there is an inverse relationship between the variables (see Table 12).

Gender and GrLevelRegTeach have a correlation of -.237 and a significance of .198; therefore, there is no significant relationship but there is an inverse relationship between the variables.

Table 12

Teacher Survey Correlation: Gender

	Ethnicity	Gender	GrLevelSPED	GrLevelRegTeach	TeachExp
Gender					
Pearson Correlation	-.033	1	-.034	-.237	-.189
Sig (2-tailed)	.860		.857	.198	.309
N	31	31	31	31	31
	SubSPED	SubRegTeach	TeachCert	LeadershipStyle	ParentInvolve
Gender					
Pearson Correlation	.292	-.151	-.258	-.263	.198
Sig (2-tailed)	.111	.417	.162	.153	.285
N	31	31	31	31	31

Gender and TeachExp have a correlation of -.189 and a significance of .309; therefore, there is no significant relationship but there is an inverse relationship between the variables.

Gender and SubjSPED have a correlation of .292 and a significance of .111; therefore, there is no significant relationship.

Gender and SubRegTeach have a correlation of -.151 and a significance of .417; therefore, there is no significant relationship but there is an inverse relationship between the variables.

Gender and TeachCert have a correlation of -.258 and a significance of .162; therefore, there is no significant relationship but there is an inverse relationship between the variables.

Gender and LeadershipStyle have a correlation of -.263 and a significance of .153; therefore, there is no significant relationship but there is an inverse relationship between the variables.

Gender and ParentInvolve have a correlation of .198 and a significance of .285; therefore, there is no significant relationship.

GrLevelSPED

GrLevelSPED and GrLevelRegTeach have a correlation of -.572 and a significance of .001; therefore, there is a significant relationship and there is an inverse relationship between the variables (see Table 13).

GrLevelSPED and TeachExp have a correlation of .159 and a significance of .394; therefore, there is no significant relationship but there is an inverse relationship between the variables.

GrLevelSPED and SubjSPED have a correlation of .324 and a significance of .075; therefore, there is no significant relationship.

GrLevelSPED and SubjRegTeach have a correlation of -.635 and a significance of .000; therefore, there is a significant relationship and there is an inverse relationship between the variables.

GrLevelSPED and TeachCert have a correlation of -.034 and a significance of .856; therefore, there is no significant relationship but there is an inverse relationship between the variables.

GrLevelSPED and LeadershipStyle have a correlation of .084 and a significance of .655; therefore, there is no significant relationship.

Table 13

Teacher Survey Correlation: Number of Special Education Teachers

	Ethnicity	Gender	GrLevelSPED	GrLevelRegTeach	TeachExp
GrLevelSPED					
Pearson Correlation	-.237	-.034	1	-.572**	.159
Sig (2-tailed)	.199	.857		.001	.394
N	31	31	31	31	31
	SubSPED	SubRegTeach	TeachCert	LeadershipStyle	ParentInvolve
Pearson Correlation	.324	. -.635**	-.034	.084	.065
Sig (2-tailed)	.075	.000	.856	.655	.728
N	31	31	31	31	31

GrLevelSPED and ParentInvolve have a correlation of .065 and a significance of .728; therefore, there is no significant relationship.

GrLevelRegTeach

GrLevelRegTeach and TeachExp have a correlation of -.147 and a significance of .430; therefore, there is no significant relationship but there is an inverse relationship between the variables (see Table 14).

GrLevelRegTeach and SubjSPED have a correlation of -.602 and a significance of .000; therefore, there is a significant relationship and there is an inverse relationship between the variables.

GrLevelRegTeach and SubRegTeach have a correlation of .614 and a significance of .000; therefore, there is a significant relationship.

Table 14

Teacher Survey Correlation: Number of Regular Education Teachers

	Ethnicity	Gender	GrLevelSPED	GrLevelRegTeach	TeachExp
GrLevelRegTeach					
Pearson Correlation	.278	-.237	-.572**	1	-.147
Sig (2-tailed)	.129	.198	.001		.430
N	31	31	31	31	31
	SubSPED	SubRegTeach	TeachCert	LeadershipStyle	ParentInvolve
GrLevelRegTeach					
Pearson Correlation	-.602**	.614**	-.066	.213	.087
Sig (2-tailed)	.000	.000	.723	.251	.641
N	31	31	31	31	31

GrLevelRegTeach and TeachCert have a correlation of -.066 and a significance of .723; therefore, there is no significant relationship but there is an inverse relationship between the variables.

GrLevelRegTeach and LeadershipStyle have a correlation of .213 and a significance of .251; therefore, there is no significant relationship.

GrLevelRegTeach and ParentInvolve have a correlation of .087 and a significance of .641; therefore, there is no significant relationship.

TeachExp

TeachExp and SubjSPED have a correlation of -.141and a significance of .449; therefore, there is no significant relationship but there is an inverse relationship between the variables (Table 15).

Table 15

Teacher Survey Correlation: Teacher Years of Experience

	Ethnicity	Gender	GrLevelSPED	GrLevelRegTeach	TeachExp
TeachExp					
Pearson Correlation	-.319	-.189	.159	-.147	1
Sig (2-tailed)	.080	.309	.394	.430	
N	31	31	31	31	31
	SubSPED	SubRegTeach	TeachCert	LeadershipStyle	ParentInvolve
Pearson Correlation	-.141	-.042	.248	.213	.069
Sig (2-tailed)	.449	.824	.178	.251	.712
N	31	31	31	31	31

TeachExp and SubRegTeach has a correlation of -.042 and a significance of .824; therefore, there is no significant relationship but there is an inverse relationship between the variables.

TeachExp and TeachCert has a correlation of .248 and a significance of .178; therefore, there is no significant relationship.

TeachExp and LeadershipStyle has a correlation of .213 and a significance of .251; therefore, there is no significant relationship.

TeachExp and ParentInvolve has a correlation of .069 and a significance of .712; therefore, there is no significant relationship.

SubjSPED

SubjSPED and SubRegTeach has a correlation of -.355 and a significance of .050; therefore, there is a significant relationship and there is an inverse relationship between the variables (see Table 16).

SubjSPED and TeachCert has a correlation of -.348 and a significance of .055; therefore, there is not a significant relationship and there is an inverse relationship between the variables.

SubjSPED and LeadershipStyle has a correlation of -.282 and a significance of .125; therefore, there is no significant relationship but there is an inverse relationship between the variables.

SubjSPED and ParentInvolve has a correlation of .057 and a significance of .759; therefore, there is no significant relationship.

Table 16

Teacher Survey Correlation: Subjects Taught by Special Education Teachers

	Ethnicity	Gender	GrLevelSPED	GrLevelRegTeach	TeachExp
SubjSPED					
Pearson Correlation	.018	.292	.324	-.602**	-.141
Sig (2-tailed)	.924	.111	.075	.000	.449
N	31	31	31	31	31
	SubSPED	SubRegTeach	TeachCert	LeadershipStyle	ParentInvolve
Pearson Correlation	1	-.355*	-.348	-.282	.057
Sig (2-tailed)		.050	.055	.125	.759
N	31	31	31	31	31

SubjRegTeach

SubjRegTeach and TeachCert have a correlation of .043 and a significance of .818; therefore, there is not a significant relationship between the variables (see Table 17).

SubjRegTeach and LeadershipStyle have correlation of .191 and a significance of .302; therefore, there in so significant relationship.

SubjRegTeach and ParentInvolve have a correlation of-.183 and a significance of .324; therefore, there is no significant relationship but there is an inverse relationship between the variables.

Table 17

Teacher Survey Correlation: Subjects Taught by Regular Education Teachers

	Ethnicity	Gender	GrLevelSPED	GrLevelRegTeach	TeachExp
SubjRegTeach					
Pearson Correlation	.060	-.151	-.635**	.614**	-.042
Sig (2-tailed)	.747	.417	.000	.000	.824
N	31	31	31	31	31
	SubSPED	SubRegTeach	TeachCert	LeadershipStyle	ParentInvolve
Pearson Correlation	-.355*	1	.043	.191	-.183
Sig (2-tailed)	.050		.818	.302	.324
N	31	31	31	31	31

TeachCert

TeachCert and LeadershipStyle have a correlation of .081 and a significance .666; therefore, there is no significant relationship (see Table 18).

TeachCert and ParentInvolve have a correlation of -.150 and a significance .422; therefore, there is no significant relationship but there is an inverse relationship between the variable.

Table 18

Teacher Survey Correlation: Teacher Certification

	Ethnicity	Gender	GrLevelSPED	GrLevelRegTeach	TeachExp
TeachCert					
Pearson Correlation	.094	-.258	-.034	-.066	.248
Sig (2-tailed)	.616	.162	.856	.723	.178
N	31	31	31	31	31
	SubSPED	SubRegTeach	TeachCert	LeadershipStyle	ParentInvolve
Pearson Correlation	-.348	.043	1	.081	-.150
Sig (2-tailed)	.055	.818		.666	.422
N	31	31	31	31	31

LeadershipStyle

LeadshipStyle and ParentInvolv have a correlation of .266 and a significance of .148; therefore, there is no significant relationship (see Table 19).

Table 19

Teacher Survey Correlation: Leadership Style

	Ethnicity	Gender	GrLevelSPED	GrLevelRegTeach	TeachExp
LeadershipStyle					
Pearson Correlation	-.044	-.263	.084	.213	.213
Sig (2-tailed)	.815	.153	.655	.251	.251
N	31	31	31	31	31
	SubSPED	SubRegTeach	TeachCert	LeadershipStyle	ParentInvolve
Pearson Correlation	.-282	.191	.081	1	.266
Sig (2-tailed)	.125	.302	.666		.148
N	31	31	31	31	31

Summary of Teacher Survey Correlations

Survey participants included 31 Special Education and Regular Education teachers from the selected Title I schools that agreed to participant in the study. The survey included questions to measure teacher perception of parental involvement for SWDs and school leadership style as it relates to SWDs. The analysis of the data from the survey suggests the following: (a) no significance among the variables for Ethnicity or Gender, (b) significance for GrLevelSPED and GrLevelRegTeach, (c) significance for GrLevelSPED and SubRegTeach, (d) significance for GrLevelRegTeach and SubRegTeach, and (e) significance for SubjSPED and SubRegTeach.

Interview Participants

The interview participants for this study were purposefully selected by the researcher from the survey participants. Two participants were selected from School 1 and three participants were selected from School 2. The interview participants' years of experience range from 6-10 years to 21-25 years. All interview participants were African-American females. Table 20 shows the demographic information of interview participants.

Table 20

Demographic Information of Interview Participants

Teacher Name	T1SpEd	T2Reg	T3SpEd	T4SpEd	T5Reg
Level	Elementary	Elementary	Middle	Middle	Middle
Years of Experience	6-10 yrs.	16-20 yrs.	11-15 yrs.	21-25 yrs.	11-15 yrs.
Certification	T-5	T-5	T-5	T-5	T-5
Ethnicity	African Am	African Am	African Am	African Am	African Am
Gender	Female	Female	Female	Female	Female

Data in Response to the Research Questions

RQ1: In the selected Title I schools, is there a significant difference between students with disabilities (SWDs) CRCT test scores and their special education setting?

According to the *t*-test findings for reading, there is a *t*-test significance of .000. The findings indicated that SWDs in the resource settings had a mean score of 1.688

compared to SWDs in the self-contained setting which had a mean score of 1.318; therefore, there is a significance for reading and special education settings for SWD. According to the *t*-test findings, for math there is a *t*-test significance of .000. The findings indicated that SWDs in the resource settings had a mean score of 1.347 compared to SWDs in the self-contained setting which had a mean score of .973; therefore, there is a significance for math and special education settings for SWD (see Table 21).

Table 21

Participants' CRCT t-Test by Special Education Setting

		Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		t-test for Equality of Means						
									95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
SPED Setting		F	Sig.	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference	Lower	Upper
CRCT: Level Any; Date : Any; Section: Reading; Year: 2011-2012; Value: Scaled Score;	Equal variances assumed	.002	.969	-3.721	125	.000	-.3693	.0993	-.5658	-.1729
	Equal variances not assumed			-3.759	120.337	.000	-.3693	.0983	-.5638	-.1748
CRCT: Level Any; Date : Any; Section: Math-GPS; Year: 2011-2012; Value: Scaled Score	Equal variances assumed	46.422	.000	-4.627	125	.000	-.3745	.0809	-.5347	-.2143
	Equal variances not assumed			-4.948	117.422	.000	-.3745	.0757	-.5244	-.2246

RQ2: In the selected Title I schools, is there a significant difference between students with disabilities CRCT test scores and their gender?

According to the *t*-test findings, for Reading there is a *t*-test significance of .006. The findings indicated that female SWDs had a mean score of 1.704 compared to males which had a mean score of 1.417; therefore, there is a significance for Reading and Gender for SWD. According to the *t*-test findings, for math there is a *t*-test significance of .594. The findings indicated that female SWDs had a mean score of 1.214 compared to males which had a mean score of 1.167; therefore, there is not a significance for math and gender for SWD (see Table 22).

RQ3: What is the performance outcome of SWDs of each disability area of the selected Title I schools?

According to the Disability Area Crosstabulation for CRCT reading, the data illustrate the following outcomes (see Table 23):

1 = Autism, 5 students scored the following: 2 scored at Level 1(.5) on the CRCT-M, 2 scored at Level 1 (1.0) on the CRCT, and 1 scored at Level 2 (2.0) on the CRCT.

2 = Emotional Behavior Disorder, 14 students scored the following: 1 scored at Level 1(.5) on the CRCT-M, 6 scored at Level 1(1.0) on the CRCT, 1 scored at Level 2 (1.5) on the CRCT-M, 5 scored at Level 2 (2.0) on the CRCT, and 1 scored at Level 3 (3.0) on the CRCT.

Table 22

Participants' CRCT t-Test by Gender

		Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		t-test for Equality of Means						
									95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
Gender		F	Sig.	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference	Lower	Upper
CRCT: Level Any; Date : Any; Section: Reading; Year: 2011-2012; Value: Scaled Score;	Equal variances assumed	1.296	.257	-2.781	125	.006	-.2874	.1033	-.4919	-.0829
	Equal variances not assumed			-2.780	101.985	.006	-.2874	.1034	-.4925	-.0824
CRCT: Level Any; Date : Any; Section: Math-GPS; Year: 2011-2012; Value: Scaled Score	Equal variances assumed	1.690	.196	-.535	125	.594	-.0476	.0891	-.2239	.1286
	Equal variances not assumed			-.514	89.045	.609	-.0476	.0927	-.2318	.1365

Table 23

The Relationship between CRCT Results in Reading and Disability Area

		Disability Area								
		1	2	3	4	6	7	8	9	Total
CRCT: Level Any; Date : Any; Section: Reading; Year: 2011-2012; Value: Scaled Score;	.5	2	1	7	2	0	0	0	0	12
	1.0	2	6	24	1	3	0	2	1	39
	1.5	0	1	5	0	2	3	0	0	11
	2.0	1	5	38	1	7	0	10	0	62
	2.5	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	1
	3.0	0	1	0	0	0	0	1	0	2
Total		5	14	75	4	12	3	13	1	127

3 = Specific Learning Disability, 75 students scored the following: 7 scored at Level 1 (.5) on the CRCT-M, 24 scored at Level 1 (1.0) on the CRCT, 5 scored at Level 2 (1.5) on the CRCT-M, 38 scored at Level 2 (2.0) on the CRCT, and 1 scored at Level 3 (2.5) on the CRCT-M.

4 = Mild Intellectual Disability, 4 students scored the following: 2 scored at Level 1 (.5) on the CRCT-M, 1 scored at Level 1 on the CRCT, and 1 scored at Level 2 on the CRCT.

6 = Other Health Impaired, 12 students scored the following: 3 scored at Level 1 (1.0) on the CRCT, 2 scored at Level 2 (1.5) on the CRCT-M, and 7 scored at Level 2 (2.0) on the CRCT.

7 = Significantly Developmentally Delayed, 3 students scored at Level 2 (1.5) on the CRCT-M

8 = Speech Language Impairment, 13 students scored the following: 2 scored at Level 1 (1.0) on the CRCT, 10 scored at Level 2 (2.0), and 1 scored at Level 3 (3.0).

9 = Traumatic Brain Injury, 1 student scored at Level 1 (1.0) on the CRCT.

According to the Disability Area Crosstabulation for CRCT math, the data illustrate the following outcomes (see Table 23):

1 = Autism, 5 students scored the following: 2 scored at Level 1 (.5) on the CRCT-M, 1 scored at Level 1(1.0) on the CRCT, 2 and scored at Level 2 (2.0) on the CRCT.

Table 23

The Relationship between CRCT Results in Math and Disability Area

		Disability Area								
		1	2	3	4	6	7	8	9	Total
CRCT: Level Any; Date : Any; Section: Math-GPS; Year: 2011-2012; Value: Scaled Score	.5	2	0	6	2	2	3	0	0	15
	1.0	1	11	50	1	5	0	8	1	77
	1.5	0	1	7	1	1	0	0	0	10
	2.0	2	2	12	0	4	0	4	0	24
	3.0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	1
Total		5	14	75	4	12	3	13	1	127

2 = Emotional Behavior Disorder, 14 students scored the following: 11 scored at Level 1 (1.0) on the CRCT, 1 scored at Level 2 (1.5) on the CRCT-M and 2 scored at Level 2 (2.0) on the CRCT.

3 = Specific Learning Disability, 75 students scored the following: 6 scored at Level 1 (.5) on the CRCT-M, 50 scored at Level 1 (1.0) on the CRCT, 7 scored at Level 2 (1.5) on the CRCT-M, and 12 scored at Level 2 (2.0) on the CRCT.

4 = Mild Intellectual Disability, 4 students scored the following: 2 at Level 1 (.5) on the CRCT-M, 1 scored at Level 1 (1.0) on the CRCT, and 1 at Level 2 (1.5) on the CRCT-M.

6 = Other Health Impaired, 12 students scored the following: 2 students scored Level 1 (.5) on the CRCT-M, 5 students scored Level 1 (1.0) on the CRCT, 1 student scored Level 2 (1.5), and 4 scored at Level 2 (2.0) on the CRCT.

7 = Significantly Developmentally Delayed, 3 scored at Level 1 (.5) on the CRCT-M.

8 = Speech Language Impairment, 13 students scored the following: 8 scored at Level 1 (1.0) on the CRCT, 4 scored at Level 2 (2.0) on the CRCT, and 1 scored Level 3 (3.0) on the CRCT.

9 = Traumatic Brain Injury, 1 students scored at Level 1 (1.0) on the CRCT.

RQ4: Is there a significant relationship between the reading levels on the CRCT and math levels on the CRCT for the SWDs in grades 3 thru 8 at selected Title I schools?

According to the correlations, there is a .458 Pearson Correlation and a .000 significance; therefore, there is a significance for Reading and Math of SWD (see Table 24).

RQ5: From the dependent variable of reading for SWDs at the selected Title I schools, is there a statistically significant relationship among the dependent and selected variables?

As shown in Table 24, according to the correlations:

- There is a .094 Pearson Correlation and a .293 significance; therefore, there is not a significance for reading and Grade for SWD.
- There is a -.057 Pearson Correlation and a .528 significance; therefore there is not a significance for reading and SES for SWD.
- There is a .021 Pearson Correlation and .814 significance; therefore there is not a significance for reading and race for SWD.

Table 24

The Relationship between CRCT Results in Math and Disability Area

		CRCT: Level Any; Date : Any; Section: Reading; Year: 2011-2012; Value: Scaled Score;	CRCT: Level Any; Date : Any; Section: Math-GPS; Year: 2011-2012; Value: Scaled Score	Grade	SES	Race	Disability Area
CRCT: Level Any; Date : Any; Section: Reading; Year: 2011-2012; Value: Scaled Score;	Pearson Correlation	1	.458**	.094	-.057	.021	.216*
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000	.293	.528	.814	.015
	N	127	127	127	127	127	127
CRCT: Level Any; Date : Any; Section: Math-GPS; Year: 2011-2012; Value: Scaled Score	Pearson Correlation	.458**	1	-.168	.112	.084	.094
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000		.059	.209	.348	.296
	N	127	127	127	127	127	127
Grade	Pearson Correlation	.094	-.168	1	-.044	.034	-.120
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.293	.059		.624	.701	.179
	N	127	127	127	127	127	127
SES	Pearson Correlation	-.057	.112	-.044	1	-.141	.194*
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.528	.209	.624		.114	.029
	N	127	127	127	127	127	127
Race	Pearson Correlation	.021	.084	.034	-.141	1	-.078
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.814	.348	.701	.114		.384
	N	127	127	127	127	127	127
Disability Area	Pearson Correlation	.216*	.094	-.120	.194*	-.078	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.015	.296	.179	.029	.384	
	N	127	127	127	127	127	127

- There is a .216 Pearson Correlation and .015 significance; therefore there is a significance for reading and disability area for SWD.

RQ6: From the dependent variable math for SWDs at the selected Title I schools, is there a statistically significant relationship among the dependent and selected variables?

According to the Correlations in Table 24:

- There is a -.164 Pearson Correlation and a .059 significance; therefore there is not a significance for math and grade for SWD.
- There is a .112 Pearson Correlation and a .209 significance; therefore there is not a significance for math and SES for SWD.
- There is a .084 Pearson Correlation and .348 significance; therefore there is not a significance for math and race for SWD.
- There is a .094 Pearson Correlation and .296 significance; therefore there is not a significance for math and disability area for SWD.

RQ7: What are the perceptions of selected teachers on the performance of SWDs on the CRCT in reading and math?

Summary and Analysis of Transcribed Responses

Five purposefully selected teachers that completed the teacher survey were interviewed in their individual classrooms by the researcher to ascertain their lived experiences of working with students with disabilities in Title I schools. The interview also sought to determine if these selected teachers believed that their school's administrator was supportive of the special education program, as a whole, including students and teachers. This section provides a summary and analysis by the researcher of

each interview question. The researcher included any intergroup or intragroup phenomenon that emerged from the interviewees' responses.

Interview Question #1: Have you noticed a difference in the performance levels on the CRCT in Reading and Math of students with disabilities that you serve based on their disability category?

Table 25 provides a summary of transcribed responses for Interview Question #1.

Table 25

Summary of Responses for Interview Question #1

Teachers	Summary of Transcribed Response	Analysis of Transcribed Response
T1SpEd	EBD students typically do better than students with other disabilities when as they mature. As behaviors decrease, achievement increases. SLD students score lower than EBD students when the EBD students have gained control over their behavior.	Students that are classified as having an Emotional Behavior Disorder fair better on the CRCT than students classified in other disability areas.
T3SpEd	EBD and Speech students do better. SLD students do better in Reading than in Math	Students that are classified as having an Emotional Behavior Disorder fair better on the CRCT than students classified in other disability areas.

(continued)

Table 25 (continued)

Teachers	Summary of Transcribed Response	Analysis of Transcribed Response
T4SpEd	EBD do better because they have no intellectual deficits. SLD students seem to perform lower	Students that are classified as having an Emotional Behavior Disorder fair better on the CRCT than students classified in other disability areas.
T2Reg	No, but SWD students that spend the majority of their day in regular ed, tend to do better	Students that spend the majority of the school day in the regular education classroom fair better on the CRCT.
T5Reg	No Sometimes they score higher than the regular ed students.	There is not difference in the performance on the CRCT among the disability categories.

The special education teachers consistently stated that students that have a disability in the area of Emotional Behavior Disorder perform better on the CRCT than students classified as having any of the other disability. T1SpEd noted that as student behaviors decrease, achievement increases. Furthermore, T4SpEd noted that students classified as EBD perform better because they have "no intellectual deficits." The Regular Education teachers both indicated that they have not noticed a difference in the performance of SWD based on their disability category. However, T2Reg indicated that SWD the spend 80% or more of their time in the regular education setting perform better than SWD in self-contained or small group classes. There were no noted similarities between the special education teachers' responses and the regular education teacher responses.

Interview Question #2: Have you observed during your experience with working with students with disabilities if there is a disability category that seems to perform better overall than the other categories?

Table 26 provides a summary of transcribed responses for Interview Question #2.

Table 26

Summary of Responses for Interview Question #2

Teacher	Summary of Transcribed Response	Analysis of Transcribed Response
T1SpEd	SLD score better overall. EDB students' behaviors interfere with their learning.	Students classified as having a Specific Learning Disability score better overall than students classified in other disability categories.
T3SpEd	EBD students perform better. The behavior is the problem, not a learning disability. When their behavior is under control, they do better.	Students that are classified as having an Emotional Behavior Disorder fair better on the CRCT than students classified in other disability areas.
T4SpEd	EBD students	Students that are classified as having an Emotional Behavior Disorder fair better on the CRCT than students classified in other disability areas.

(continued)

Table 26 (continued)

Teacher	Summary of Transcribed Response	Analysis of Transcribed Response
T2Reg	Speech students and students with physically disabilities do better.	Students classified as having a Speech Language Impairment and those with physical disabilities score better overall than students classified in other disability categories.
T5Reg	No specific disability	There is no disability category that out performs another on the CRCT.

The two out of three of the special education teachers indicated that students with a disability in the area of EBD perform better overall on the CRCT. T1SpEd indicated that students with a disability in the area of Specific Learning Disability (SLD) perform better overall she noted that students categorized as EBD would perform better if their behaviors were not a factor. T2Reg indicated that students with classified as having a Speech Impairment and those students that have physical disabilities perform better on the CRCT while T5Reg indicated that no disability category out performed another on the CRCT. There are no noted similarities between special education teachers and regular education teachers for IQ2.

Interview Question #3: Do the students with disabilities that you serve tend to do better on the reading portion of the CRCT or the Math portion of the CRCT? Table 27 provides a summary of transcribed responses for Interview Question #3.

Table 27

Summary of Responses for Interview Question #3

Teacher	Summary of Transcribed Response	Analysis of Transcribed Response
T1SpEd	Students do better on Math CRCT	Students perform better on the Math portion of the CRCT due to having severe reading deficits.
T3SpEd	Reading	Students perform better on the Reading portion of the CRCT
T4SpEd	Math performance has declined.	Performance on the Math portion of the CRCT has declined due to the restrictions placed on with accommodations are considered standard or non-standard.
T2Reg	It varies based on the student.	Performance on the Reading and Math portion of the CRCT varies; it is based on each student's area of strength.
T5Reg	Reading	Students perform better on the Reading portion of the CRCT.

For Interview Question (IQ) #3, the special education teachers did not reveal any commonalities related to which portion of the CRCT, reading or math, in which SWD perform better. The regular education teachers, like the special education teachers, did not reveal any commonalties as a group, but two teachers, one special education and one regular education teacher did indicated that SWD students fair better on the reading

portion of the CRCT. IQ3 did not reveal any phenomena between the two groups of teachers, nor within each group of teachers.

Interview Question #4: Have you observed a difference in students with disabilities performance on the CRCT based on the level of parental involvement?

Table 28 provides a summary of transcribed responses for Interview Question #4. For IQ4, the majority of the participants agreed that SWD that have parents actively engaged in their education tend to do perform better on the CRCT. The only outlier for this question was T5Reg. T5Reg indicated that there is no noted difference in the performance of SWD on the CRCT based on parental involvement.

Table 28

Summary of Responses for Interview Question #4

Teacher	Summary of Transcribed Response	Analysis of Transcribed Response
T1SpEd	SWD with parents that actively participate typically do better.	Students with disabilities that have parents that are actively engaged in their educational process perform better on the CRCT.
T3SpEd	SWD with parents that are involved do much better.	Students with disabilities that have parents that are actively engaged in their educational process perform better on the CRCT.
T4SpEd	Yes, overall SWD with involved parents do better.	Students with disabilities that have parents that are actively engaged in

(continued)

Table 28 (continued)

Teacher	Summary of Transcribed Response	Analysis of Transcribed Response
		their educational process perform better on the CRCT.
T2Reg	SWD with parents that are more involved tend to have better results.	Students with disabilities that have parents that are actively engaged in their educational process perform better on the CRCT.
T5Reg	No.	There is no noted difference in the performance of students with disabilities based on parental involvement.

Interview Question #5: Have you observed a difference in students with disabilities performance on the CRCT based on the level of the students' socioeconomic status?

Table 29 provides a summary of transcribed responses for Interview Question #5. Responses for IQ5 revealed the regular education teachers believe that SES does have an adverse effect on the student achievement of SWDs. There was not a consensus among the Special Education teachers; responses indicated that T1SpEd believes that SES does have a negative effect on the CRCT performance of SWDs. While T3SpEd contends that SEC does not have and an adverse effect. T4SpEd reported that students' SES is unknown and therefore SES has not been considered as a hindrance for SWD student achievement.

Table 29

Summary of Responses for Interview Question #5

Teacher	Summary of Transcribed Response	Analysis of Transcribed Response
T1SpEd	Yes. Those students from a poorer background struggle and don't do as well. If they have high parental involvement, they do better.	Socioeconomic status does have an adverse effect on the performance of students with disabilities on the CRCT.
T3SpEd	No, it depends on the individual student's level of motivation	Socioeconomic status does not have an adverse effect on the performance of students with disabilities on the CRCT.
T4SpEd	Unknown	Student socioeconomic status is unknown by the teacher and she has not taken this into account as it pertains to student achievement.
T2Reg	No observed difference	Socioeconomic status does not have an adverse effect on the performance of students with disabilities on the CRCT.
T5Reg	No.	Socioeconomic status does not have an adverse effect on the performance of students with disabilities on the CRCT.

Interview Question #6: Have you observed a difference in students with disabilities performance on the CRCT based on the students' gender?

Table 30 provides a summary of transcribed responses for Interview Question #6.

Table 30

Summary of Responses for Interview Question #6

Teacher	Summary of Transcribed Response	Analysis of Transcribed Response
T1SpEd	Females tend to do better.	Females with identified disabilities seem to perform better on the CRCT than males.
T3SpEd	Girls do better in Reading, boys do better in Math	Females do better in Reading, males do better in Math.
T4SpEd	Males do better in Math	Males do better in Math, rarely does a female student exceed on the Math portion of the CRCT
T2Reg	Girls do better	Females with identified disabilities seem to perform better overall on the CRCT than males.
T5Reg	No	No significant difference between male and female performance on the CRCT.

Participants indicated that females do better than males on the CRCT. However, teacher T4SpEd indicated that male perform better in math. T5Reg indicated that there is not a difference in the performance of males and females on the CRCT, this participant's

answer serves as an outlier for this question since no gender group was identified as performing at levels greater than the other.

Interview Question #7: Have you observed a difference in students with disabilities performance on the CRCT based on the students ethnicity?

Table 31 provides a summary of transcribed responses for Interview Question #7.

Table 31

Summary of Responses for Interview Question #7

Teacher	Summary of Transcribed Response	Analysis of Transcribed Response
T1SpEd	Yes, Hispanic students seem to be more motivated than African-American students	Hispanic students perform better than African American students on the CRCT.
T3SpEd	ESOL students do better in Math, in Reading they have difficulties understanding the wording of the questions	ESOL students are Latino/Hispanic students, the teacher noted that these students tend to do better in Math due to the language barrier that can hinder them in the area of Reading.
T4SpEd	African-American students tend to do better.	African-American students perform better on the CRCT than the other ethnicity groups represented within the school.
T2Reg	No.	No differences observed
T5Reg	Hispanics are now out performing African-Americans	Hispanic students perform better than African American students on the CRCT

The participants did not reveal an intergroup consensus nor an intragroup consensus based on the answers given revealed in each interview. Responses ranged from African-Americans performing better to Hispanics faring better to no differences observed among the ethnic groups.

Interview Question #8: Describe the phenomenon of teaching and learning in your Math classes.

Table 32 provides a summary of transcribed responses for Interview Question #8.

Table 32

Summary of Responses for Interview Question #8

Teacher	Summary of Transcribed Response	Analysis of Transcribed Response
T1SpEd	Daily Routine, Math 4 Today(spiral review/sponge/opener), Lesson(integration of technology), In class quizzes(periodically), review with teacher asking questions, and independent practice	Math classes have a daily routine that allows for the inclusion of standard based instructional strategies that include the infusion of technology.
T4SpEd	Sponge activity, Lesson, students placed into groups, teacher and para work with groups and individual students, teacher checks for understanding, review/check for understanding from whole group by asking questions, assign homework.	Math classes have a daily routine that includes differentiated instruction and small group/individualized instruction.

Both participants revealed that their classes had established daily routines which consisted of, but was not limited to, opening activities at the beginning of each class, a lesson and a review at the end of the class period. Teachers also included asking probing questions about the lessons to check for student understanding and allowing time for independent practice.

Interview Question #9: Describe the phenomenon of teaching learning in you reading classes.

Table 33 provides a summary of transcribed responses for Interview Question #9.

Table 33

Summary of Responses for Interview Question #9

Teacher	Summary of Transcribed Response	Analysis of Transcribed Response
T1SpEd	Daily Routine: Read 4 Today(Sponge/Opener), incorporation is Science & Social Studies into Reading(passages, stories, etc..) Teacher reads aloud to model reading, reading skills incorporated into lessons	Reading classes have a daily routine that allows for the inclusion of standard based instructional strategies that include the infusion of technology.
T3SpEd	Daily Routine: Activating strategy(Sponge), review of activating strategy, lesson	Reading classes have a daily routine that allows for the inclusion of standard based instructional strategies

(continued)

Table 33 (continued)

Teacher	Summary of Transcribed Response	Analysis of Transcribed Response
T2Reg	Daily Routine: Ticket in the door, write down homework, complete any work/notes from previous day, peer review of standards with SWD students that have Reading difficulties, teacher review of the standard, lesson, vocabulary/spelling activity, whole group activity with the promethean board, small group station rotations, ticket out the door(individualize questions to check for understanding	Reading classes have a daily routine that allows for the inclusion of standard based instructional strategies that include the infusion of technology.
T5Reg	Daily Routine: activating strategy(sponge), lesson, completion of a graphic organizer and or notes, independent class work, group activity(weekly), summarize the lesson	Reading classes have a daily routine that allows for the inclusion of standard based instructional strategies that include the infusion of technology

All participants revealed that their Reading classes had established routines and the use of instructional based strategies. Three of the four participants also revealed the use of technology was also a part of their norms for delivering instruction.

Interview Question #10: How prepared do you think that students with disabilities are for taking the CRCT?

Table 34 provides a summary of transcribed responses for Interview Question #10.

Table 34

Summary of Responses for Interview Question #10

Teacher	Summary of Transcribed Response	Analysis of Transcribed Response
T1SpEd	They are prepared. If they do not do well it is because they did not apply the strategies that have learned. Sometimes they don't want to complete the test and do not take advantage of extended time.	Students with disabilities are prepared for the CRCT by the teachers throughout the year through the teaching of content and test-taking strategies
3SpEd	CRCT skills are not taught explicitly, skills are embedded into the content.	CRCT skills are not taught explicitly, skills are embedded into the content.
T4SpEd	Prepared when taught the skill. Too much time between learning the skills and the test	Students with disabilities to not retain information throughout the school year; therefore they are not successful on the CRCT
T2Reg	Those that are in regular ed at least 80% of the time are better equip to be successful on the CRCT than those in self-contained classes	Students with disabilities that are placed in regular education classes at least 80% of the instructional day are more successful than students with disabilities in self-contained classes.
T5Reg	Team-taught students well prepared because they are exposed to the same rigor as regular education students	Students with disabilities that are in team-taught classes are well prepared for the CRCT.

For Interview Question #10, all of the participants' answers varied. There was not a consensus about student preparation among the special education teachers. The regular education teachers both concluded that SWD who have academic classes in the regular education setting are better prepared for the CRCT.

Interview Question #11: What do your school's principal do to support teaching and learning for students with disabilities?

Table 35

Summary of Responses for Interview Question #11

Teacher	Summary of Transcribed Response	Analysis of Transcribed Response
T1SpEd	Not a lot. No profession development opportunities presented. Teachers rely on special education support personnel to support them with professional development or they have to find professional development opportunities for themselves.	School administrators do not support students with disabilities
T3SpEd	Admin has implemented co-teaching models. SWD students seem to better in this setting.	School administrators have supported students with disabilities by incorporating more co-teaching models in the school.
T4SpEd	Regular ed students and SWD are treated equally	Students with disabilities are treated the same as students without disabilities

(continued)

Table 35 (continued)

Teacher	Summary of Transcribed Response	Analysis of Transcribed Response
T2Reg	They don't do enough. Not enough money or support put into special education. Teachers are not supported and therefore the SWD students are not supported	School administrators do not do enough to support students with disabilities.
T5Reg	Not the administrators responsibility, teachers should support SWD. Administrators do listen to teacher concerns regarding SWD scheduling	Teachers should support students with disabilities, not administrators.

For Interview Question 11, there was not a consensus about administrative support among neither the special education teachers nor the regular education teachers, however; there was a consensus between T1SpEd and T2Reg. T1SpEd and T2Reg teachers that agreed about the level of administrative support both currently work at the same school and were rating the same administrator. T3SpEd and T4SpEd both indicated that the administration at their school was supportive and inclusive of SWDs, while T5Reg indicated that administrators should not be responsible for supporting SWD and the support lies with the teachers of SWD.

Emerging Themes from Teacher Interviews

This section describes the emerging themes that were revealed through the individual teacher interviews conducted by the researcher.

Theme 1: Purposeful Routines and Procedures

When describing their daily routines and procedures, each teacher implicitly described the daily activities that existed in their classrooms. From the interviews it was ascertained that each of the teachers routines and procedures were indicative of a Standard Based Classroom which includes rituals and routines that are posted and observed throughout the classroom. Within a Standards Based Classrooms, students have a clear understanding what is to take place daily as well as how things are done and the roles and procedures for the classroom (Georgia Department of Education, 2012).

> My students are familiar with the routine. It's established, the procedures, the expectations, are established at the beginning of the year and they know when they come in that there will be an agenda on the board and they know that each day it will include . . . (T1SpED, personal communication, November 5, 2012)

Theme 2: Preemptive Student Placement

An intervention strategy that emerged from the interview protocol was student placement in regular education. The regular education teachers seemed to believe that the students that they teach or have taught in the past who spend more time in the regular education setting fair better on the CRCT and perform better overall then those students that spend the majority of their academic day in the small group special education setting:

> I've notice a difference in the students that I particularly serve that stay in my class for 80% of my class period or more. (T2Reg, personal communication, November 7, 2012)

> The students that are in the classroom 80% of the time and that are being monitored are more equip to be successful on the CRCT than the students that are in self-contained class with students with disabilities teacher. The information that is on the CRCT is. I'm going to leave it like that . . . The students that are in class with the regular ed teacher are more prepared than the student that are in a self-contained class. (T2Reg, personal correspondence, November 7, 2012)

Benefits for SWDs that spend more of their school day in inclusive setting include increased achievement on IEP goals, greater access to the regular education curriculum, and higher expectations from teachers.

Theme 3: Shared Responsibility of Support

Smith (2001) described the special roles that parents play in the overall educational design of their child's IEP. He indicated that parents and teachers working together effectively is a critical component to the overall development of the individualized education plan. Some of the potential benefits of parental involvement included: increasing the teacher's understanding of the child's environment, adding to parents' knowledge of child's educational setting, improving communication between parents and the school, increasing the school's understanding of the child and increasing the likelihood that with improved understanding between home and school will result in mutually agreed upon educational goals.

Overall the majority of the teachers interviewed agreed that parental involvement is an important part of SWDs overall academic improvement and success. The teachers indicated that they have observed that parents that are actively engaged in their children's

education, which includes, attending parent-teacher conferences, IEP meetings, and allowing students to attend enrichment programs provided by the school; students do better overall.

> Typically my students whose parents participate in their IEP meetings, transition meetings for the sixth grade, parent-teacher conferences . . . those are the students that are well aware that their parents are involved, therefore; they're more motivated and when they know that there is a partnership between myself and the other grade-level teachers and their parents they typically do better. (T1SpEd , personal communication, November 5, 2012)

> Well when the parents are involved the students do much better. It seems to me when the parents are involved they make sure that their children are here for the extended learning so we can help them prepare for the CRCT. And parent involvement moves the children in a better direction and to focus more on the CRCT. Once these parents know that they have to pass the CRCT they sign these kids up for extended day. (T3SpEd, personal communication, November 7, 2012)

> I have noticed a slight difference. Students tend to perform better if their parents are more involved. It tends to help to support the student overall and they tend to give out better results. (T2Reg, personal communication, November 7, 2012)

Theme 4: Reliable Indicators of Achievement

From the interviews, there seemed to be some overarching reasons that were indicator of achievement for SWDs. In question one of the interview protocol, special

education teachers revealed that students who have been placed in the disability category of Emotional Behavior Disorder tend to score better on the CRCT than students that have been placed in various other disability categories, while the regular educations teachers agreed that more time in regular education classes is a clear indicator or greater SWDs achievement. Therefore, SWDs disability category and the amount of time that they spend in the regular education setting seem to be indicators of student achievement in these school settings. The interviews also revealed that parental involvement was paramount in student achievement.

Summary

Two purposefully selected Title I schools, one elementary school and one middle school, from a large Metropolitan school district in the Southeast region of the United States participated in the research study. Data were collected in three ways: standardized assessment results, teacher survey, and teacher interviews.

The analysis of the standardized assessment results revealed the following: (a) there is a significant difference between SWDs CRCT test scores and their special education setting for both reading and math, and (b) there is a significance between SWD CRCT test scores and their gender for reading, but there is not a significance between SWD CRCT test scores and their gender for math. The findings also indicated that there is a significance in reading and disability category. The performance outcomes of SWDs scoring at a Level 2 or Level 3 on the CRCT in each disability category revealed the following:

Reading: Autism 60%, Emotional Behavior Disorders 50%, Specific Learning Disabilities 58.6%, Mild Intellectual Disabilities 25%, Other Health Impairment 75%, Significant Developmentally Delayed 100%, Speech Language Impairment 84.6% and Traumatic Brain Injury 0%.

Math: Autism 40%, Emotional Behavior Disorders 21.4%, Specific Learning Disabilities 25.3%, Mild Intellectual Disabilities 25%, Other Health Impairment 41.6%, Significant Developmentally Delayed 0%, Speech Language Impairment 38.4% and Traumatic Brain Injury 0%.

Survey participants included 31 special education and regular education teachers from the selected Title I schools that agreed to participant in the study. The analysis of the data from the survey suggests the following: (a) no significance among the variables for Ethnicity or Gender, (b) significance for GrLevelSPED and GrLevelRegTeach, (c) significance for GrLevelSPED and SubRegTeach, (d) significance for GrLevelRegTeach and SubRegTeach, and (e) significance for SubjSPED and SubRegTeach.

Of the 31 survey participants, five participants were selected using Convenience sampling. These participants were selected based on their ability and willingness to be interviewed by the researcher within the time limitations of the researcher. From the interviews four emerging themes were revealed, they included: Purposeful Routines and Procedures, Preemptive Student Placement, Shared Responsibility of Support, and Reliable Indicators of Achievement.

CHAPTER VI

FINDINGS, CONCLUSIONS, IMPLICATIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This chapter provides the findings, conclusions, implications, and recommendations that were derived from the research study conducted. This chapter also includes the purpose of the study, a summary of the review of literature, and the research methods used in the study.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study was to examine the extent of the relationship of the CRCT scores in reading and math for students with disabilities and purposefully selected independent variables in selected Title I schools. A teacher survey also identified perspectives of student achievement from the teachers of selected students with disabilities to ascertain emerging themes from their perceptions and experiences of school leadership characteristics as outlined in the literature review.

Review of Literature

The review of literature supports the notion that student achievement, as it relates to students with disabilities, is influenced the following variables: federal legislation, state policy, local education agencies, school leadership, highly qualified teachers, parents and IEP, students with disabilities, gender, ethnicity and socioeconomic status, and reading.

Research Methods

A QUAN-QUAL Model was in this research study. The quantitative portion of the research study focused on the possible relationships that may exist between selected variables that may impact student performance of students with disabilities at selected Title I schools. The research design required the use of the correlation, descriptive statistical analysis, and semistructured purposefully selected interviews based upon survey results. The purpose of the qualitative portion of the study was to examine whether special education teachers' instructional strategies influence the outcomes of students with disabilities test scores on the Georgia Criterion Reference Competency Test. Using a survey questionnaire followed by a semistructured follow-up interview conducted by the researcher, the researcher analyzed the data to ascertain if there is any significance.

Findings

As a result of the analysis from Chapter V, the researcher has extrapolated the following findings to the research questions that guided the study.

RQ1: In the selected Title I schools, is there a significant difference between students with disabilities (SWDs) CRCT test scores and their special education setting?

The analysis of the data revealed that when considering the CRCT test scores for students with disabilities, there is a significance for reading and special education setting. The analysis also revealed a significance for math and special education setting. Student performance is influenced by the setting in which they receive academic instruction.

RQ2: In the selected Title I schools, is there a significant difference between students with disabilities CRCT test scores and their gender?

The analysis of the data revealed that there is a significance for reading and gender for students with disabilities, but there was no significance for math and gender for students with disabilities reveal through the data.

RQ3: What is the performance outcome of SWDs of each disability area of the selected Title I schools?

For reading, the analysis of the data revealed that the following percentages of SWDs meeting and exceeding the standard: Autism 60%, Emotional Behavior Disorders 50%, Specific Learning Disabilities 58.6%, Mild Intellectual Disabilities 25%, Other Health Impairment 75%, Significant Developmentally Delayed 100%, Speech Language Impairment 84.6% and Traumatic Brain Injury 0%.

For math, the analysis of the data revealed that the following percentages of SWDs meeting or exceeding the standard: Autism 40%, Emotional Behavior Disorders 21.4%, Specific Learning Disabilities 25.3%, Mild Intellectual Disabilities 25%, Other Health Impairment 41.6%, Significant Developmentally Delayed 0%, Speech Language Impairment 38.4% and Traumatic Brain Injury 0%. The analysis suggests that students with disabilities in all categories perform better in Reading as opposed to Math on the CRCT.

RQ4: Is there a significant relationship between the Reading levels on the CRCT and math levels on the CRCT for the SWDs in grades 3 thru 8 at selected Title I schools?

The analysis of the data reveal that there is a significant relationship between reading and math levels on the CRCT for students with disabilities in grades 3 thru 8. There was .458 Pearson Correlation and a .000 significance. Therefore, reading and math do directly correlate with one another in terms of SWD student achievement.

RQ5: From the dependent variable of reading for SWDs at the selected Title I schools, is there a statistically significant relationship among the dependent and selected variables?

Among the variable there was not a significance for reading and grade for SWD, reading and SES for SWD, reading and race for SWD, or reading and disability area for SWD. Therefore, none of the variables have a significant relationship with the reading achievement of SWDs.

RQ6: From the dependent variable math for SWDs at the selected Title I schools, is there a statistically significant relationship among the dependent and selected variables?

Among the variables there was not a significance for math and grade for SWD, math and SES for SWD, math and race for SWD, or math and disability area for SWD. Therefore, none of the variables have a significant relationship with the math achievement of SWDs.

RQ7: What are the perceptions of selected teachers on the performance of SWDs on the CRCT in reading and math?

From the answers gathered from the interviewees, it was determined that the teachers believed that student achievement can be improved through the use of Standards

Based instructional strategies including the use of establishing Standards Based routines and procedures that govern the daily activities and practices of the each teachers' classes. The teachers also revealed that SWDs that have been placed in the disability category of Emotional Behavior Disorder tend to produce better test scores than SWDs in other categories. There was not a consensus among the teachers regarding what portion of the CRCT SWDs perform better. The researcher noted that the teachers interviewed indicated that SWDs performed better in the subject in which the interviewee taught. As a result, it is believed that the teachers see the subject that they teach as the subject that their students perform better on when assessed with the CRCT. Both special education and regular education teachers revealed through the interview that girls not only do better in reading than boys, but they also perform better overall than boys. The teachers interviewed attributed the success of the girls to their overall focus and motivation being higher than the boys. However, the math teachers that were interviewed revealed that boys do better in math than their female counterparts. Teachers also agreed that parental involvement influences the overall student achievement levels of SWDs. The teachers also believed that SES did not play a significant role in the CRCT performance outcomes for SWD. The researcher attributes this to the high number of students that receive free or reduced lunch at the schools.

Conclusions

Many variables impact the overall performance of students with disabilities. Based on the findings, the researcher revealed some of the variables that impact the performance outcomes of SWDs on the CRCT. The reading performance of SWDs is

directly influenced by the classroom setting that the students are placed and the students' documented disability category. The data and the teacher interviews revealed that SWDs tend to perform better in inclusive settings than in small group settings. During the interviews, the teachers also attributed higher test scores to those students who have parents that are actively engaged in their education and students categorized as having an Emotional Behavior Disorder.

Gender was found to influence achievement in reading but not in math. When looking at SWD performance in disability groups, the study revealed that overall all the disability categories performed better in reading than in math. As a result, the researcher concluded that parental involvement, special education setting, gender, and disability category directly effect SWD performance on the CRCT.

Implications

This study was conducted to ascertain what variables influenced the students with disabilities performance on state mandated assessments, specifically the Georgia CRCT. The findings indicated that selected variable have a direct effect on the overall performance of SWDs on the assessment. As a result, two implications for theory and practice have been revealed as a result of this study.

First, there is an astronomical among of research that supports the notion that reading is an indicator and predictor for student success in other academic areas. The analysis of the data revealed that SWDs performed better in reading than in math. The implication results indicate student achievement in the area of math can be increased for

minority students with if research based instructional strategies are implemented in SWD classroom in schools classified as Title I by the state and local education agencies.

The argument of including students with disabilities in the regular education setting has been ongoing since the mandates of PL 94-142. As a result, educators and scholars have informed LEAs that the most effective way to improve student achievement for SWDs is by using inclusive practices when assigning students with disabilities to classes. Currently there is a push for LEAs to improve their least restrictive environment (LRE) percentages. This means that state education agencies are monitoring the number of students that school districts have in small group, self-contained classrooms or those students that spend the majority of their day in a special education setting. IEP teams must ensure that recommendations for SWD class placement are reflective of each student's ability. Therefore, special education classrooms should be used as supplemental instructional not as only a place where SWDs go to receive the majority of their academic instruction.

Gender differences in student performance in not a new area of interest for educators. This study revealed that there was a significant difference between SWD test scores and gender for reading, conversely there was no significance discovered for SWD test scores and gender for math. The implication that is evident from these findings is that there is a high probability that SWD gender affects their overall performance outcomes on the CRCT. Overall, the data on SWDs performance indicated that they fair better in reading than in math across the identified disability areas. As a result, more emphasis should be placed on math instructional strategies for SWDs.

The findings in the study also revealed that teachers' use of Standards Based instructional strategies and classroom management procedures proved to be beneficial to SWDs in both the special education and regular education settings. By establishing routines and procedures, teachers gave students consistency in classroom norms and expectations.

Lastly, the findings in the study indicated that there should be a shared responsibility among for SWD performance among the stakeholders in the selected Title I schools. When stakeholders assume responsibility for SWD performance on the CRCT, students' performance outcomes are greater.

Limitations of the Study

The limitations to this study included the following: First, analyses were limited to students with disabilities from a single public school district located in one metropolitan area from an elementary and feeder middle school. Secondly, this study was limited to students in grades three through eight from one local educational agency within a Southern state. Next, previous Georgia CRCT test performance data cannot be compared to 2011 data due to the CRCT-M being added to the testing options for students with disabilities. In addition, teaching styles varied due to the students having various teachers that use different teaching techniques. Lastly, the purposefully selection of the interview participants was driven by cooperation of the participants who participated in the survey and limitation of the number available for interview.

Recommendations

Recommendations are provided for classroom teachers, educational leaders and educational leadership programs and stakeholders that influence educational policy and future researchers.

Recommendations for Classroom Teachers

In the not so distant past, only special education teachers were responsible for the increase in student achievement for SWDs. Now regular education teachers too have the task of ensuring the SWDs not only exposed to the regular education curriculum, but the expectation is that SWDs meet and/or exceed the same standards that their non-disabled peers are required to meet. As a result, all classroom teachers should be engaging in Standards Based instructional strategies that have been effective in increasing student achievement for all students. In addition to Standards Based instructional practices, classroom teachers should also actively seek professional development opportunities provided to them by their schools districts and by outside agencies on effective Co-Teaching models, Differentiated Instruction, and Backwards Design. With the increasing requirement for SWDs to be mainstreamed into the regular education setting for greater portions of the instructional day, more training is need so that all teachers are able to effectively and efficiently deliver instruction to all students in an inclusive environment. All of these instructional models, if implemented correctly, have the potential to positively impact student achievement for SWDs.

Recommendations for Educational Leaders and Educational Leadership Programs

Building level administrators have the astronomical task of ensuring that all students receive a free and appropriate education. As a result, they need to be equipped with the necessary knowledge, skills, and dispositions that will ensure that students with disabilities receive quality instruction and are appropriately placed in classes that will enhance their overall performance outcomes. Educational Leadership programs that are charged with producing the future leaders of schools should include in their course requirements classes that give in depth look into Special Education Law, Special Education policies, and Special Education best practices and procedures in a school setting. If school leaders and knowledgeable about best practices and appropriate procedures, they will be better equip to make sound decisions about student achievement for students with disabilities which will contribute to the increase in the academic performance for this population.

Recommendations for Stakeholders Engaged in the Development of Educational Policy for Students with Disabilities

When considering polices that influence the students with disabilities stakeholder should consider not only the policy, but also the requirements for implementation of the policy. An important step to ensuring that polices are properly implemented begin at the teacher preparation stages. Teacher education programs with advance degrees in special education should develop a research methods class that requires an action research project that promotes mix-methods research designs around problems of students with disabilities in the regular school setting.

Recommendations for Future Researchers

The findings it this study revealed that reading has a significant impact on the student achievement of students with disabilities. As a result, it is recommended that future researchers begin to study the factors that influence successful Reading programs for students with disabilities. Conversely, it was revealed that math is an area that students with disabilities did not show substantial gains. As a result, it is also recommended that future researchers study the factors that influence the math performance of students with disabilities. In addition, research is needed in the area of effective instructional strategies in the area of math for SWDs.

Parental involvement emerged as a significant variable during the teacher interviews. It is recommended that future researchers conduct studies that center around evaluating the factors that influence successful parental involvement programs that have a primary focus on the SWD population. Schools should also incorporate Epstein's Spheres of Influence and six models of parental involvement into their overall parental involvement school plan.

Since school leadership is seen as a paramount predictor of student achievement, it is suggested that future researchers conduct case study analyses on focusing on the leadership styles of building principals and the leadership qualities that positively impact student achievement of students with disabilities. Lastly, it is recommended that further research is conducted for the population that was used in this study. It is the suggestion of the researcher that a longitudinal study on SWDs in grades 3-8 be conducted to ascertain the students' perceptions on what variables effect student performance.

Additionally, a larger study should be conducted in a school district that has been identified as having a high number of Title I schools, to ascertain if statistical significance can be validated through correlation, factor, and regression analysis.

Summary

It was the goal of this study to disclose some of the variables that directly impact the performance of SWDs on the CRCT in order to improve instructional practices of classroom teachers, the quality of educational leadership programs, the awareness of school leaders on the needs of SWDs and the teachers that provide instruction to them, and to give stakeholders that influence educational policy suggestions on implementation for polices that directly effect SWD student achievement. This study revealed through the triangulation of the data some variables that impact the performance of students with disabilities on the CRCT. The researcher concluded that parental involvement, special education setting, gender, and disability category directly effect SWD performance on the CRCT. Recommendations were suggested for classroom teachers, educational leaders and educational leadership programs, stakeholders that influence policy, and future researchers.

APPENDIX A

Consent Form

SELECTED VARIABLES AND FACTORS RELATED TO PERFORMANCE OF STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES: IMPLICATIONS FOR SCHOOL LEADERS

You are invited to be in a research study of *what variables and factors influence the performance of students with disabilities on the Georgia Criterion-Referenced Competency Test.* This study examines the extent of the relationship of the CRCT scores in Reading and Math for students with disabilities and teachers of students with disabilities perceptions and experiences of school leadership at selected Title I schools as it relates to students with disabilities.

You were selected as a possible participant because you serve students with disabilities within a Title I school. We ask that you read this form and ask any questions you may have before agreeing to be in the study.

This study is being conducted by: Yolanda Brownlee-Williams, Doctoral Candidate; Educational Leadership Department, School of Education, Clark Atlanta University

Background:
This study examines the extent of the relationship of the CRCT scores in Reading and Math for students with disabilities and teachers' perceptions and experiences of school leadership as it relates to students with disabilities. This study seeks to offer an in-depth analysis of what selected variables and factors contribute to the overall performance of students with disabilities on the CRCT in the areas of Reading and Math, it also seeks to explore selected teachers of students with disabilities perceptions and experiences of school leadership at selected Title I schools as it relates to students with disabilities.

Procedures:
Should you decide to participate in this study, you will be asked to complete a survey that is related to the research study. In addition, selected participants will be asked to participate in a one-time face-to-face interview for one hour. For the selected interview participants, a follow-up phone call may be warranted for clarification. Your responses to

Appendix A (continued)

the interview questions will be audio-recorded and later transcribed for analysis and comparison.

Benefits:
The benefits to participation are:

- adding to the professional body of research;
- providing insight on the potential variables and factors that influence students with disabilities CRCT test scores in Title I schools; and
- providing school leaders with valuable information about how their style of leadership impacts students with disabilities.

Confidentiality:
The records of this study will remain private. Any report that is published as a result of the research conducted in this study will not include any information that will make it possible to identify a participant. Research records will be kept in a locked file with only the researcher having access to the file. All audio recordings will be accessible to the researcher only and destroyed after transcription and verification. All data will be preserved for 5 years and then destroyed.

Voluntary Nature of Study:
Your decision whether or not to participate will not affect your current or future relations with the researcher or Clark Atlanta University. This study complies with the protection requirements for ethical research and is strictly voluntary. Upon consent, you may withdraw from this study at any time. Any data collected will be destroyed immediately upon your withdrawal.

Contacts and Questions:
The researcher conducting this study is:
Yolanda Brownlee-Williams * Department of Educational Leadership, School of Education, Clark Atlanta University
Email: yolanda.williams@students.cau.edu *Phone: 678.618.1718

Supervisor of this study is:
Dr. Trevor Turner, Dissertation Committee Chair *Department of Educational Leadership, School of Education, Clark Atlanta University
Email: tturner@cau.edu *Office Phone: 404.880.8980

You may ask any questions you have now. If you have questions later about the research, you may contact the researcher or the researcher's advisor.

Appendix A (continued)

If you have any questions now, or later, related to the integrity of the research, (the rights of research subjects or research-related injuries, where applicable), you are encouraged to contact Dr. Georgaianna Bolden at the Office of Sponsored Programs (404) 880-6979 or Dr. Paul I. Musey, (404) 880-6829 at Clark Atlanta University.

You will be given a copy of this form to keep for your records.

Statement of Consent: I have read the above information. I have asked questions and have received answers. I consent to participate in the study.

Signature_____ Date:_____

Signature of Investigator _____ Date:_____

APPENDIX B

Research Survey

SELECTED VARIABLES AND FACTORS RELATED TO PERFORMANCE OF STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES: IMPLICATIONS FOR SCHOOL LEADERS

Directions: Please answer the following questions below. Please note that some questions are specifically for Regular Education teachers and some are specifically for Special Education teachers.

1. What is your ethnicity?

___African American ___Asian ___Caucasian

___Latino ___Multiracial ___Other

2. What is your gender?

___ Male ___Female

3. (For Special Education Teachers Only): In which primary grade level(s) did you serve children with SWDs in 2012, as a Special Education Teacher?

___3 ___4 ___5 ___6

___7 ___8

4. For Regular Education Teachers Only) In which primary grade level were you assigned in 2012, as a regular education teacher?

___3 ___4 ___5 ___6

___7 ___8

5. As of the 2012 academic year how long have you been teaching?

___0-5 years ___6-10 years ___11-15 years

___16-20 years ___21-25 years ___26+ years

Appendix B (continued)

6. (Special Education Teachers ONLY): What subject did you provide most of your services to SWDs as a special education in 2012?

___Reading ___Language Arts ___Math

___Science ___Social Studies

7. (Regular Education Grade Level Teacher): What subject did you provide most of your services to SWDs as a regular education teacher in 2012?

___Reading ___Language Arts ___Math

___Science ___Social Studies

8. What is the highest degree level of teacher certification you hold in the State for which you currently work? (Do not include other endorsements or leadership certification in the response)

___T-4 ___T-5 ___T-6 ___T-7

For questions 9-18, please reflect on your experiences with your current principal and answer the questions based on the rating scale provided. Please answer the following questions using the scale below.

1 = never 2 = rarely 3 = sometimes

4 = regularly 5 = always

9. Your principal empowers teachers to do what is best for students.

1 2 3 4 5

10. Your principal's willingness to empower teachers is demonstrated with his/her support of students with disabilities.

1 2 3 4 5

11. Your principal is seen as a strong role model because of his/her empowering of teachers.

1 2 3 4 5

12. Your principal empowers teachers through listening to concerns of teachers in their efforts to serve SWDs by building cooperation between members on the IEP team.

1 2 3 4 5

Appendix B (continued)

13. Your principal creates a vision for supporting SWDs by using people in the organization to support their success in the school environment.

    1 2 3 4 5

14. Your principal acts as a change agent by implementing a culture of supporting the needs of regular education teachers who serve students with SWDs.

    1 2 3 4 5

15. Your principal acts as a change agent in the school organization by helping others contribute to the needs of SWDs in preparation for the CRCT.

    1 2 3 4 5

16. From my reflections and records, Parents of SWDs under my care attended IEP meetings.

    1 2 3 4 5

17. During the 2011-2012 school year, parents of my SWDs attended parent-teacher conferences.

    1 2 3 4 5

18. During the 2011-2012 school year, parents of my SWDs actively participated in IEP development.

    1 2 3 4 5

APPENDIX C

Teacher Interview Protocol

SELECTED VARIABLES AND FACTORS RELATED TO PERFORMANCE OF STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES: IMPLICATIONS FOR SCHOOL LEADERS

Interview Question 1: Have you noticed a difference in the performance levels on the CRCT in Reading and Math of the students disabilities that you serve based on their disability category?

Interview Question 2: Have you observed during your experience with working with students with disabilities if there is a disability category that seems to perform better overall than the other categories?

Interview Question 3: Do the SWDs that you serve tend to do better on the Reading portion of the CRCT or the Math portion of the CRCT?

Interview Question 4: Have you observed a difference in SWD performance on the CRCT based on the level of parental involvement?

Interview Question 5: Have you observed a difference in SWD performance on the CRCT based on the level of the students' socioeconomic status?

Interview Question 6: Have you observed a difference in SWD performance on the CRCT based on the students' gender?

Interview Question 7: Have you observed a difference in SWD performance on the CRCT based on the students' ethnicity?

Interview Question 8: Describe the phenomenon of teaching and learning in your Math classes.

Interview Question 9: Describe the phenomenon of teaching and learning in your Reading classes.

Interview Question 10: How prepared do you think that SWDs are for taking the CRCT?

Interview Question 11: What do your schools administrators do support teaching and learning for SWDs?

APPENDIX D

Transcribed Teacher Interviews

SELECTED VARIABLES AND FACTORS RELATED TO PERFORMANCE OF STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES: IMPLICATIONS FOR SCHOOL LEADERS

Teacher Interview #1
November 05, 2012
Time: 1:24pm
Duration: 11mins 43secs

Question 1: Have you noticed a difference in the performances levels on the CRCT in Reading and Math of students with disabilities that you serve based on their disability category?

Yes I have. (Ok). For example, a student ah typically students that I serve with a behavior disorder, maybe not necessarily have a disability as far as um specific learning disability I've witnessed a lot of times that they would do better on the CRCT um than the students with a specific learning disability. Now these are students that has typically grown a lot and their behaviors. . . inappropriate behaviors have decreased tremendously those students that able to focus and that have grown in that area they are typically the ones that will do, out perform the students with um specific learning disabilities.

Question 2: Have you observed during your experience with working with students with disabilities if there is a disability category that seems to perform better overall than the other categories?

I would think that overall in my experience that students with specific learning disabilities...maybe in one category maybe Reading or Math, they tend to outperform um for example my students with Autism spectrum disorder and even some of the students with behavior disorders that who's behaviors interfere with their learning.

Question 3: Do students with disabilities that you serve ten to do better on the Reading portion of the CRCT or the Math portion of the CRCT?

Appendix D (continued)

Yes, students, my students in the past have typically done better with the Math portion of the CRCT, as I believe that a lot of them are below level in Reading and a lot of times they have to comprehend on a higher level such as making inferences, predictions, um.. inferring what is going on in the text and not just simply recalling the basic facts or the main characters of a text. So their able to calculate and things like that their able to learn a procedure and carry that out a little bit easier.

Question 4: Have you observed a difference in students with disabilities performance on the CRCT based on the level of the parental involvement?

Yes. Typically my students whose parents participate in their IEP meetings, transition meetings for the 6th grade, um parent-teacher conferences…those are the students that are well aware that their parents are involved, therefore; they're more motivated and when they know that there is a partnership between myself and the other grade-level teachers and their parents they typically do better.

Question 5: Have you observed a difference in students with disabilities performance on the CRCT based on the level of the students' socioeconomic status?

Yes. Those students that tend to come from a poorer background tend to struggle with concepts and a lot of times don't do as well. But it's also based on motivation as well because I have had students that are from a lower socioeconomic background but their motivated and there is high parental involvement. So they do tend to do better.

Question 6: Have you observed a difference in students with disabilities performance on the CRCT based on the students' gender?

Yes, I have. Most of the time, um, in the past, I've only had a few female students um maybe one or two on average on my caseload, but I have observed that they tend to better. They tend to be a little more motivated than my male students.

Question 7: Have you observed a difference in students with disabilities performance on the CRCT based on the students' ethnicity?

Yes. I have observed that my Hispanic students tend to be more motivated than my African-American students and they tend to out-do, outperform them on test.

Question 8: Describe the phenomenon of teaching and learning in your Math classes.

Um my students are familiar with the routine. Its established, the procedures, the expectations, are established at the beginning of the year and they know when they come in that there will be an agenda on the board and they know that each day it will include:

Appendix D (continued)

Math 4 Today that is basically like a spiral review of different skills, rules, multiplication, division, word problems, a little bit of algebra, probability. So the skills are basically the same each week. It's a spiral review to help them with all the concepts. And then after that, they know that they also...for example if they are weak in some areas, from like the previous unit test, like Unit 1 test for example, I pick the areas that they exhibited difficulties in and I go back and I review. I might put up about 5 problems in those areas as a way to review, to remediate them in those weak areas. And then from there we go on to our main lesson. And each day I try to integrate technology. For example, Brain-Pop...and those are all standards based, research based sites...Brain-Pop, sometimes Discovery Education videos to hook them into the lesson to help them to buy in to it first and also Study Island, that's another main one and Education City. And then sometimes we will do the quizzes together as a class. I'll question theme to clear up any misconceptions, and then go on and model and guide them in practice and then they complete independent practice or group work.

Question 9: Describe the phenomenon of teaching and learning in you Reading classes.

Reading is basically the same thing I use the same procedures, they have a Read 4 Today activity and we also um try to integrate, especially this year, Social studies and other subject areas into it. So for example, there after the Read 4 Today they may complete a mini, just a mini paragraph that, for example, we've been talking about slavery and the Civil War, and to integrate those Reading skills and Social Studies as well, so they may have to answer: What is share cropping? Or whatever and each day they learn a different skill. So they're learning about Social Studies in Reading. And then after that we also have a novel...the system is big on pushing a novel and more and more Reading. So our novel for the 1st was Still Away Home. So I'll do a read aloud that they can hear with good reading sound like and question them. And have them...and I display it under the document camera so that they can see it on the screen because we don't have a lot of copies of it so I display it and I'm able to have them utilize context clues to identify unfamiliar words to help build their vocabulary. And we do word walls um.. they do buddy reading. Like I said, lessons on Study Island. We try to integrate a lot of technology.

Question 10: How prepared do you think that students with disabilities are for taking the CRCT?

Hmmm. Typically by the end of the year, my students they are prepared. Um, a lot of times what effects them is if they don't put the skills and the strategies into practice that we've taught them. Um, cause we teach them how to scan...we teach them how to make

Appendix D (continued)

inferences. We teach them all of these skills.. we teach them how to scan for answers, to locate facts, we teach em the strategies for example in Math, the order of operation, what you ought to do...this and that. But if they don't apply the strategies, cause a lot of times they are well able to do good whether it's the modified or the regular CRCT, they are able to do good and able to pass. But we've had issues in the past with them actually wanting to do the work and take their time and use the extended time.

Question 11: What do your schools' administrators do to support teaching and learning for students with disabilities?

There's not a lot that is in place as far as trainings, professional development opportunities. Um, if it doesn't come from the IST, it really doesn't come from the main stream administration as far as the principal, the assistant principal, and unfortunately even the curriculum support teacher. Um, anything we receive it has to come from...any trainings in the community or in the school system or wherever it has to come from the IST or we have to know let me go on Employee Express...I know that I'm experiencing this issue or whatever...let me go on Learning Solutions and see what I can do to better my craft. Um, but there's really no support other than at the beginning of the year the principal stating that we need accommodations out by end of the 2nd week to all general ed teachers. And this year it was a requirement that she received a copy of the signature, them signing/stating whether it was Music or any other subject area...stating that they received the accommodations that they knew that they were accountable. But nothing on co-teaching or anything.

4th grade Reading and Language Arts teacher
School 1
Interview #2
11/07/12
Start time: 3:02 pm
Duration: 7min 57secs

Question 1: Have you noticed a difference in the performance levels on the CRCT in Reading and Math of SWD that you serve based on their disability category?

No, not based on their category but, I've notice a difference in the students that I particularly serve that stay in my class for 80% of my class period or more.

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Question 2: Have you observed during your experience with working with SWD if there is a disability category that seems to perform better overall than the other disabilities?

Yes, students with speech and students with physical disabilities.. not necessarily academic disabilities.

Question 3: Do the SWDs that you serve tend to do better on the Reading portion of the CRCT or the Math portion of the CRCT?

Well it varies depending on the student and their strengths. It can vary, some students are extremely high in Math compared to Reading or Reading compared to Math it just depends on that particular student's strength.

Question 4: Have you observed a difference in SWD performance on the CRCT based on the level of parental involvement?

I have noticed a slight difference. Students tend to perform better if their parents are more involved. It tends to help to support the student overall and they tend to give out better results.

Question 5: Have you observed a difference in SWD performance on the CRCT based on the level of the students' socioeconomic status?

I have not observed a difference in their performance based on their socioeconomic status.

Question 6: Have you observed a difference in SWD performance on the CRCT based on the students' gender?

I have observed a difference… mostly girls tend to do better on the CRCT with disabilities. They tend to be more focused on the lesson. They tend to outscore their male counterparts.

Question 7: Have you observed a difference in SWD performance on the CRCT based on the students' ethnicity?

No I haven't

Question 9: Describe the phenomenon of teaching and learning in your Reading classes.

In my class students are held accountable for everything as soon as they walk into the classroom until the time that they leave. Basically they start with the ticket in the door,

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they have to come in and answer a success criteria question based on something that we've studied before. Or today it was something as basic as a picture of George Washington and they had to identify him and an event that he did in the United States. Its something simple, but recurring information so we can build upon when they get into the classroom. They then are to unpack, write down your homework, if there are any charts or graphs that they have not written down, write those down. We have students who go over the standards with students who have Reading disabilities before I go over it so they get a double dose from their peer and their teacher. Then I began my lesson with the spelling/vocabulary. Everyday we do a different activity with our spelling words..we do a different activity with our vocabulary words because children all learn different so I have to make sure that they get it different ways. After that we do a whole group lesson, a promethean board activity, a whole group reading activity because we are reading a novel. After we go through that we continue with our small groups, after our small groups we have another large group...within that small group, we do rotations in the classroom where they go from center to center based upon a standard that we are working on for Language Arts or for Reading. When we gather together at the end of the day, we make sure that I sign agenda books, we go over expectations, we make sure that we can do our "I can" statements, if we can't do it we work on what we can do to fix it so they can do it tomorrow. We pack up and we go home with our ticket out the door. The ticket out the door is the next standard that we are working on to make sure that they are prepared for tomorrow.

Question 10: How prepared do you think that SWDs are for taking the CRCT?

The students that are in the classroom 80% of the time and that are being monitored are more equip to be successful on the CRCT than the students that are in self-contained class with students with disabilities teacher. The information that is on the CRCT is.. I'm going to leave it like that... The students that are in class with the regular ed teacher are more prepared than the student that are in a self-contained class.

Question 11: What do your school's administrators do to support teaching and learning for SWDs?

I feel that our schools administrators do not do enough or do anything at all in support of students with disabilities. I feel that the leave them behind. They do not this about their best interest. When it comes to our students with disabilities, we are coming last. I personally feel that not enough money or support is put into special education. I feel that the support physically and mentally and emotionally is not put into it as far as becoming one with the students, the parents of the students with disabilities, it should be more of a

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support group… There not supporting the teachers or the students. And if you're not supporting teachers, you can't support the students.

8th grade Reading teacher
School 2
Interview #3
11/07/12
Start time: 3:54 pm
Duration: 7min 31secs

Question 1: Have you noticed a difference in the, levels on the CRCT in Reading and Math of SWD that you serve based on their disability category?

Yes, I do see performance level the children that I serve in Reading it seems like they do better on the CRCT in the Reading than the Math. I don't know why they do as well in the Math, I don't know if they have to learn a lot of formulas, but in the Reading they do so much better. Their reading scores are much higher than their math scores. This has been going on for the last three years I've seen it happen.

The EBD and the Speech children do much better on the Reading and Math I think. The SLD students do better in the reading than they do math.

Question 2: Have you observed during your experience with working with SWD if there is a disability category that seems to perform better overall than the other disabilities?

I think that the EBD students perform better with the academics because even though they have behavior problems, when we implement the behavior plan we can use that as a tool and once we use that as a tool and the students meet those goals of their behavior plans, they do better academically. Because they really do not have a learning disability, what they have is a behavior problem. When we assess the behavior and when we pinpoint it, the children get on task and they are able to…you know… do the work the best to their ability.

Question 3: Do the SWDs that you serve tend to do better on the Reading portion of the CRCT or the Math portion of the CRCT?

The do much better in Reading.

Question 4: Have you observed a difference in SWD performance on the CRCT based on the level of parental involvement?

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Well when the parents are involved the students do much better. It seems to me when the parents are involved they make sure that their children are here for the extended learning so we can help them prepare for the CRCT. And parent involvement moves the children in a better direction and to focus more on the CRCT. Once these parents know that they have to pass the CRCT they sign these kids up for extended day.

Question 5: Have you observed a difference in SWD performance on the CRCT based on the level of the students' socioeconomic status?

Well, it doesn't matter where the student come from, even though they come from, to me, even though many of them come from low income homes, I find that a lot of children that come from, low-income homes they do better on the CRCT. It depends on the child and the child's ability. The child's ability doesn't have anything to do with where they come from. It doesn't have anything to do with their parent's income.

Question 6: Have you observed a difference in SWD performance on the CRCT based on the students' gender?

Sometimes the boys may do a little better on the Math than the girls, you know, but the girls do a little better in Reading and Language Arts than the guys. I think I have observed that in the gender part.

Question 7: Have you observed a difference in SWD performance on the CRCT based on the students' ethnicity?

Well if it's an ESOL student it depends on the Language barrier. If they have a language barrier they will do better in Math than in reading because they would be able to understand the Reading… I do see that. Last year we had students have ESOL and they had a hard time understanding the wording of the questions

Question 8: Describe the phenomenon of teaching and learning in your Math classes.

Question 9: Describe the phenomenon of teaching and learning in your Reading classes.

In my Reading classes, what they do when they come in, I have an activating strategy up every day and, they come in they go to the bookcase and get their notebooks, they write down their agenda for the day and then when they start their activating strategy, then we go over the activating strategy, once they finish, then we will start our lesson for today. Then we will follow the agenda for rest of the day.

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Question 10: How prepared do you think that SWDs are for taking the CRCT?

Well we start preparing them when they come into the 8th grade. We don't teach CRCT skills, what we do is we just go over some skills…we teach it through our lessons. We just don't actually teach CRCT skills all year, no. We teach the reading lesson and if we see a skill that we think might be on the CRCT then we will pull that skill and we will make sure that the children will understand. Like if we something with two stories we want to do something with the story we will say let's pull compare and contrast because we know that skill is on the CRCT and we will have them compare the two stories. So we bring the skills from the CRCT into our Reading series.

Question 11: What do your school's administrators do to support teaching and learning for SWDs?

The administrator at our school, he implemented a lot of co-teaching you know with exceptional ed children going into a regular ed setting. With the two teachers, one special ed teacher and one general ed teacher and that helps the students with the CRCT because the Special ed students will feed off of the general ed students because they want to act like they belong in a classroom with the general ed kids so I think they do better in general ed setting with the children learning the same skills that they learn in the self-contained room, but they're learning in the general population. And the administration has really opened the co-teaching up in our school this school year. I mean I have more co-teaching classes than I do self-contained classes.

8th grade Math teacher
School 2
Interview #4
11/07/12
Start time: 4:04 pm
Duration: 12min 23secs

Question 1: Have you noticed a difference in the, levels on the CRCT in Reading and Math of SWD that you serve based on their disability category?

I cannot speak for reading, but I can speak for math because I do teach math. And I would say there is a difference in the performance of students with disabilities on the CRCT in math basically because over the last couple of years the state has really come down on us about the different types of accommodations that we are allowed to use, specifically the basic function calculator is of course we know, according to the manual conditional. And there have to be certain conditions that students must meet in order to use the calculator. So, since we've looked at those conditions more astringently students

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have not been having access to the calculator, therefore there has been a drop in their performance on the CRCT in mathematics.

I think it varies across categories but, those students classifies as EBD those students have no intellectual deficits it's just their behavior that get in the way that have interfered with their learning but I think that students with learning disabilities, they're the ones that seem to perform lower on any part of the CRCT test because of their difficulties or their deficits...in my opinion I think the students with disabilities classified as LD perform lower than those classified as EBD or ADD.

Question 2: Have you observed during your experience with working with SWD if there is a disability category that seems to perform better overall than the other disabilities?

I would probably say the students with EBD.

Question 3: Do the SWDs that you serve tend to do better on the Reading portion of the CRCT or the Math portion of the CRCT?

See question 1

Question 4: Have you observed a difference in SWD performance on the CRCT based on the level of parental involvement?

Ah, yeah. I can say yeah, overall. Looking at the CRCT, or just in the general classroom students who have more parental input you know parents are on them, they have to study, they have to do their homework, they have to come to Extended Day, they have to do all those things... So those students definitely overall, whether their SLD, EBD, ADHD, or MID, whatever... They tend to better because those, parents are behind them making them get to those tutorial sessions making them study, do their homework, looking over their work, sitting down with them and helping them. So yeah, they do better.

Question 5: Have you observed a difference in SWD performance on the CRCT based on the level of the students' socioeconomic status?

Well I really don't know what their status is, I don't get into that. They come to me and I try to look at what their disability is and I try to address that.

Question 6: Have you observed a difference in SWD performance on the CRCT based on the students' gender?

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I haven't really looked at that over the past. But over the past few years we seem to have more males in exceptional education classes than females. Males have always outnumbered the number of females, but it seems like this year we have more females. I think though that boys for some reason just tend to do better in Math classes. The boys seem to wear the girls out. Every now and then we will have one (girl) that will exceed.

Question 7: Have you observed a difference in SWD performance on the CRCT based on the students' ethnicity?

No, generally our African-American students do much better. I shouldn't say no.. I think when you look at the demographics of this school and where it's located. You have 99% African-American the number of other ethnic groups whether it's Asian or Caucasian or Latinos, the African-American groups they tend to do better. I don't know if it's because we have more of them, you know compared to the number of other ethnic groups

Question 8: Describe the phenomenon of teaching and learning in your Math classes..

We do a lot of movement. Well when they first come in I get them settled. The first thing that they always do it the sponge, while they do the sponge I do the attendance, or maybe a quick homework check. There's movement, they tend to feel free in here, I don't know. But after the sponge there is the engagement of the lesson to get them started and as the lesson goes on, there's chattering, there's movement, there's talking, but they're working at the same time. I may have 2 or 3 different groups. If I have a para, he's working with one group or one individual student and you know, I make my rotations and make sure that everyone understands what is being communicated, what the lesson is about, what the skill is that they're supposed to learn. Then I try to wrap it up by asking questions and see that everyone has a clear understanding...I try to clear up misconceptions. I give the homework assignment and that's it.

Question 9: Describe the phenomenon of teaching and learning in your Reading classes.

Question 10: How prepared do you think that SWDs are for taking the CRCT?

Well the CRCT, 1st of all is above the level of the students with disabilities in many aspects. Because when you think about students with disabilities, you know that there is something some deficit, you know some deficiency that they have why they are even in the program for students with disabilities. And whatever that disability is whether it's intellectual, behavioral or auditory or whatever...They are already at a setback for the test because the test is not for them. The test is supposed to show that they are able but I don't see how that is possible, because according to their psychological they are performing at

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an elementary grade level. So we know that they have deficits that inhibit memory. From August to April they are supposed to know all this stuff and then comes April and the CRCT and they are functioning on a 2nd grade level and the test is on the 8th grade level. And you say well you can't give them the calculator because they are supposed to show proficiency. I don't see how that's even a level ground for the students... so, I have a problem with that. And um.. I just don't think it's fair and I don't want to get off subject....so

They may be prepared at the moment I'm teaching that particular standard, that skill that day, but do they actually remember, can they retain, can they bring all this back on the day of the test when they learned it 5 months ago? Are they really going to be to perform on the level of the general ed students? So, I don't know whether or not the test is fair. And I know we have the CRCT-M, but then there are stipulations for that. So, there needs to be something that really is done in fairness for students with disabilities so that they can a fair and clear opportunity to perform the Statewide high stakes tests.

Question 11: What do your school's administrators do to support teaching and learning for SWDs?

Well I think that whatever needs to be done. I don't think they separate whatever needs to be done for general ed for the exceptional ed. students. I think they look at everybody as being one whole group. I don't think they separate the two. Whatever is good for the goose is good for the gander. I don't think it's separated like that.

8th grade Regular ed Reading teacher
School 2
Interview #5
11/09/12
Start time: 11:37 am
Duration: 4min 45secs

Question 1: Have you noticed a difference in the, levels on the CRCT in Reading and Math of SWD that you serve based on their disability category?

The ones that I serve, no. Although I do what I can to accommodate them, they're in a team-taught class so the material is the same as the regular ed students. Sometimes they tend to score higher than the regular ed students.

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Question 2: Have you observed during your experience with working with SWD if there is a disability category that seems to perform better overall than the other disabilities?

Not the one that serve, like I said the ones that I serve are in a team-taught class so they're more capable of handling the level of lessons even with accommodations

Question 3: Do the SWDs that you serve tend to do better on the Reading portion of the CRCT or the Math portion of the CRCT?

Normally I see that they do better on the Reading portion of the CRCT.

Question 4: Have you observed a difference in SWD performance on the CRCT based on the level of parental involvement?

No, not at all.

Question 5: Have you observed a difference in SWD performance on the CRCT based on the level of the students' socioeconomic status?

No. Not here, no.

Question 6: Have you observed a difference in SWD performance on the CRCT based on the students' gender?

No, not in here.

Question 7: Have you observed a difference in SWD performance on the CRCT based on the students' ethnicity?

Now, that I have. It seems, there seems to be a difference between African-Americans and Hispanics where its seems now that the Hispanics are now out performing African-Americans on the CRCT

Question 8: Describe the phenomenon of teaching and learning in your Math classes.

Question 9: Describe the phenomenon of teaching and learning in your Reading classes.

Daily they come in and there's an activating strategy, something to get their minds working. It always has something to do with something that we've already been talking about or a new topic that we will be discussing...a new standard that we will be addressing. From there we will discuss the activating strategy, then we will move on to, whether it's a mini lesson or continuing with something we are doing.. reading a story or

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making graphic organizers. We have either a directed lesson which is facilitated by me or my team-teacher or then we will have some independent work. Class always includes some kind of notes, some kind of independent activity for them to do. And then at least once a week I try to incorporate a group activity so that they can learn from their peers. And at the end of class we always end by summarizing the lesson. we will either summarize the whole lesson or just something that they can call and review that they've learned previously.

Question 10: How prepared do you think that SWDs are for taking the CRCT?

I think they are well prepared especially with the team-taught class because they get the same amount of rigor provided in the lesson that matches what the CRCT is asking them to do. And the accommodations that they receive are just there to help them reach that mastery level. So it doesn't take anything away from the content that they need to know.

Question 11: What do your school's administrators do to support teaching and learning for SWDs?

Honestly I think it more falls on the teachers not the administrators as far as what they do to support the students with disabilities teaching and learning. I think one thing that they do is listen to our concerns about their scheduling and what classes are best for them, what classes will fit their needs appropriately...so that's one thing I do think they do well.

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